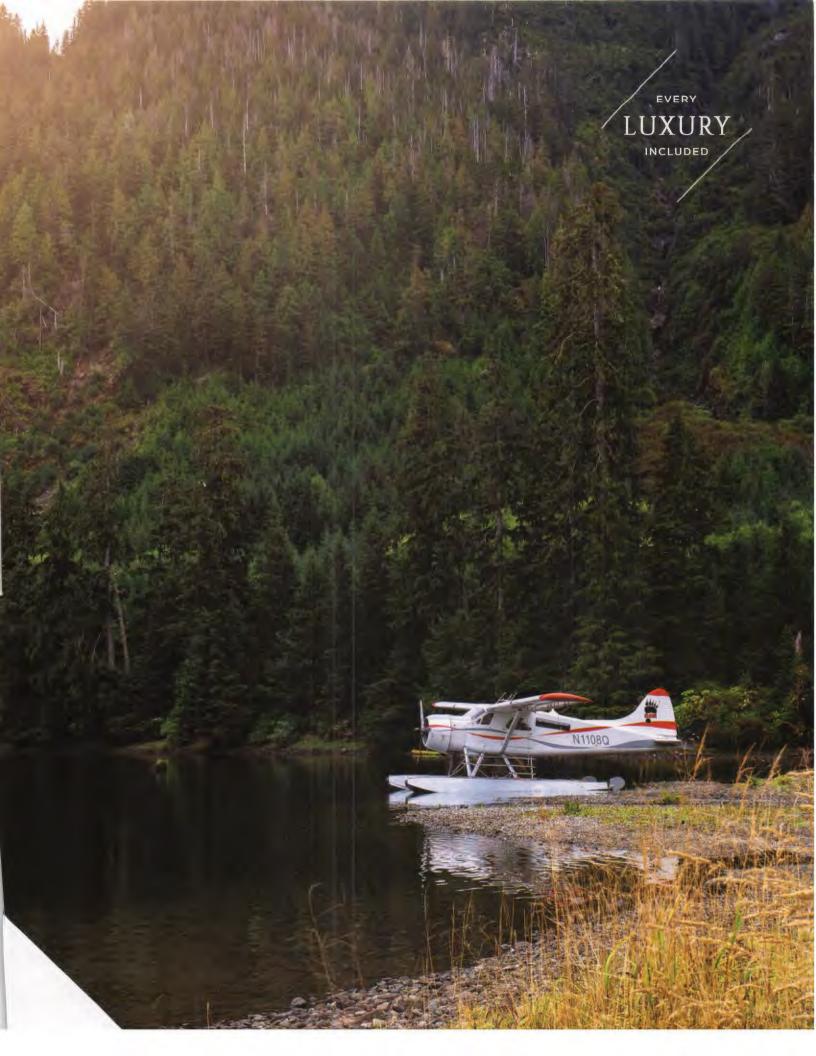
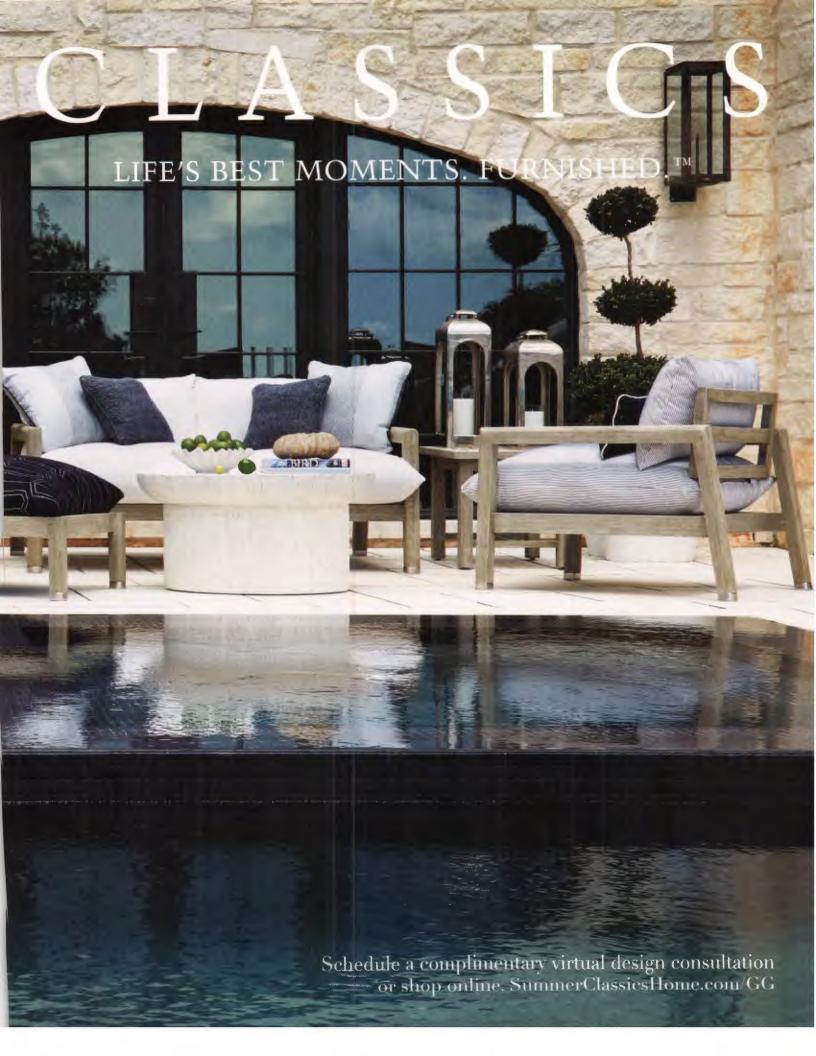
REVIVING THE SOUTH'S MEET FLORIDA'S IVE TASTY RECIPES **TARPON GURU** FOR WILD HOG **FORGOTTEN FRUIT** KID DIN the SOUTH SOAK UP BERMUDA'S LAID-BACK ELEGANCE and NATURAL BEAUTY SPIN ON CHICKEN AND WAFFLES **EXPLORE** A TEXAS ON THE RISE Bermudan Kali Lespere on the beach at Southlands park,











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Texas chef Jesse Griffiths's Yucatán-inspired boar poc chuc.

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Bermudan Kali Lespere on the beach at Southlands park. Photograph by Meredith Andrews. Dress by Mirth Caftans and earrings by Hannah Keefe, both available at Garden & Gun's Fieldshop (ggfieldshop.com). Hat by Sarah Bray Bermuda.

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- THE MAINLAND BEHIND -

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nce you teach a dog how to learn, you can really train them in anything," says Zachary Kellerman, the founder of CedarOak Kennels. Building on his career in obedience training, Kellerman went on

to pursue a greater dream: opening his multifaceted gundog kennel in southern Illinois. At CedarOak, he trains pups of all ages and skill levels to be field ready in a matter of months, using a signature method inspired by obedience and traditional English techniques. "Ifind a real joyinit," he says. "Our work is so in-depth that by the time your dog is back with you, I have no question it's ready for the field."

Training isn't the kennel's only specialty; Kellerman also imports and breeds British Labradors, each from a longline of seasoned retrievers. "There's an inherent sense of respect with these dogs," he says. "This is truly what a Labrador is meant to do." And whether the kennel is preparing dogs for the hunt or training them for life in disability service, another of Kellerman's acclaimed programs, the regimen has proven results: "Each dog is different, but when we start with the basics, they develop a strong sense of what they need to do. It's really amazing to see."

For more on CedarOak's high-caliber services, visit **CedarOakKennels.com**

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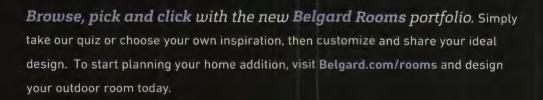
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BR-21 **Dining Out**

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DiBenedetto with a nice brown trout during a trip to Patagonia, Below: Sam in the wood duck swamp.

Yearning for an Escape

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE JOY OF MUCH-NEEDED GETAWAYS

ikemany others, as the pandemic wore on this past year, I dabbled in ways to take my mind off the constant barrage of news of rising cases and shuttered businesses. My COVID hobbies included carving hiking staffs from crape myrtle branches (after I outfitted the family, there seemed little

reason to soldier on), learning the art of bonsai (but the idea of not encouraging robust growth ran counter to my gardening intuition), and trying my hand at the guitar(tellingly, I broke a string the first time I attempted to tune it). But time at home also strengthened my appreciation for the freedom to hop in a car or on a plane and light out for places unknown.

A few months before the pandemic hit, I found myself at the Patagonia River Ranch in Argentina with a group of Garden & Gun readers. While I've been fortunate enough to cast a fly rod for sailfish in Costa Rica, bonefish in the Bahamas, and king salmon in Alaska, this was the trip of a lifetime. As I drifted the river, the scenery alone would have won the day, but the rainbows and browns hit with abandon, and lunch on the

bank beneath the willows with a bottle of malbec was nothing short of dreamy. While the ever-present Patagonian wind rustled the trees, I thought, I need to bring my family here one day.

It's just that type of escape contributing editor Latria Graham envisioned when she recently journeyed to Bermudato, as she told me in a text, "find myself again." (Read about her experiences on page 79.) Many on the staff have that same feeling of wanderlust and the yearning for self-discovery that comes with travel. Art director Julia Knetzer hopes to visit friends in Ireland this year, a trip she's long dreamed about. Photo editor Margaret Houston Dominick wants to take advantage of Western France's surfing and vineyard scene. And deputy editor David Mezz and his fishing buddies are planning to load up their kayaks and explore the waters of the New River in Virginia. I imagine you're feeling that same itch to hit the proverbial road, and I'm hopeful this issue will inspire your own adventure soon.

DAVID DIBENEDETTO

Senior Vice President & Editor in Chief

Kids Afield

A memorable first hunt

No doubt my greatest iov of this past duck season was my son's first duck hunt. Sam is still too young for a gun, but I suited him up in a new pair of Gator Waders, put on his hearing protection, handed him his own flashlight for the predawn trek to our small wood duck hole, and made sure his first experience was all about him. The woodies were sparse that morning and I didn't fire a shot, but I did take a brief spill in the cold water while picking up decoys, much to Sam's delight. It was a morning neither of us will soon forget. The turkey woods are next.





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Jill McCorkle

WRITER

In the midst of writing novels or traveling on book tours, the Hillsborough, North Carolina, author Jill McCorkle finds inspiration for short works of nonfictionoften right under her feet. "The dogs are just endlessly entertaining and begging to be written about," says McCorkle, who has authored eleven novels and short story collections. And while the massive Bernese mountain dogs Lena and Blue star in her latest story (p. 74), her labradoodle runs the show at home. "Frankie is a diva," McCorkle says. "She's definitely in charge of the big babies." For her next book, Goat Light, McCorkle teamed up with her husband, the writer and photographer Tom Rankin, for a collection of tales from their family farm.

"The dogs are just endlessly entertaining and begging to be written about"

-Jill McCorkle, who wrote the Good Dog column on page 74



Taylor

WRITER

As the front man and songwriter for Hiss Golden Messenger, the Grammynominated Americana band based in Durham, North Carolina, M. C. Taylor feels right at home spinning stories about big ideas and topics arising throughout the South. The prolific writer worked as a folklorist for the state of North Carolina before turning to music full-time, so penning an ode to histown's NorthStar Church of the Arts (p. 120) and the spirit it contributes to Durham came naturally. "it's a place that reflects the South that I believe we have the potential and capability to be," Taylor says. His next album is slated for release in March.



Latria Graham

WRITER

As Latria Graham taxied from the Bermuda airport to the Hamilton Princess & Beach Club, she pressed her face to the window to take in views of the sea, soaking in the sights in preparation for her brief in-room quarantine until the results of the governmentrequired COVID test came back. "There are no bad views on the island," says the Spartanburg, South Carolina, writer, whose work has appeared in Outside and the Guardian. "Not a single bad angle." Once she began exploring, documenting hidden coves and tropical birds (p. 79), she had three words for the experience: "Dreamy, dreamy, dreamy."



Meredith Andrews

PHOTOGRAPHER

Although Meredith Andrews has lived all over the world, she's always called Bermuda home (p. 79). "In Sweden they have this lovely phrase, 'home blind'-how when you live somewhere you can stop seeing the amazingness of it." says the portrait and travel photographer, who has shot for New York and Travel + Leisure. "I don't get home blind here. I'm in awe of it every day." Despite her love for the "beautiful rock in the middle of nowhere," as she describes the island, she's no homebody. "I love capturing portraits of strangers in new locations," Andrews says, "My favorite place to shoot is anywhere I haven't been before."



John Ed **Bradley**

WRITER

Before John Ed Bradley first saw some of Cora Kelley Ward's paintings at an auction in 2012, he'd never heard of the Louisiana-born artist. But after that day, he couldn't get her out of his head. Bradley, who has written for Sports Illustrated and Esquire and whose eighth novel will be published this spring, spent portions of the last nine years researching Ward's fascinating history for "Outside the Lines" (p. 106). "I started calling people who knew her, and met with her surviving family members, Bradley says. "I probably talked to forty or fifty people for this story. After a while, you start to get a picture of who she was."







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"My father was asked if he had a knife handy. His reply: 'I have my pants on, don't I?""

TRADITIONS THAT LAST

When I lived in Columbus, Georgia, our Piggly Wiggly ("Home for the Holidays," December 2020/January 2021) was the source for all things wonderful. Local produce, a real butcher, and barbecue sauce from restaurants in town. Where else could you choose from six brands of grits milled less than an hour away?

Rachel Sanchez Tampa, Florida

Aimee Nezhukumatathil's essay ("Home for the Holidays," December 2020/January 2021) reminded me of our family walking O'Leno State Park in Florida. We give the rangers working on the holiday a pumpkin pie and then stroll along the Santa Fe River.

Ann Lane High Springs, Florida

LAUGHING MATTERS

I enjoyed Roy Blount Jr.'s article on pocketknives (End of the Line, December 2020/January 2021). If my late father, a lifelong West Tennessean, was asked if he had a knife handy, his reply was always "I have my pants on, don't I?"

Robert Holt

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

I saw Leslie Jordan's "hunker down" videos on Instagram and was hooked (Interview, December 2020/January 2021). I doubt he has a mean bone in his body.

Jeff M. Scott Jackson, Mississippi

TREE'S COMPANY

The Tree That Owns Itself (Our Kind of Place, December 2020/ January 2021) is one of my favorite pieces of mythology about Athens, one of the loveliest, weirdest towns you'd ever want to visit (or attend university in or decide to just live in permanently).

Brian Vickery Atlanta, Georgia

I have been growing a Meyer lemon tree (What's in Season, December 2020/January 2021) in the North Carolina Piedmont for years. I'm eating the best lemons anyone can put their hands on.

Kenny Anderson Raleigh, North Carolina

Social Chatter

GARDENANDGUN.COM AND BEYOND

WE ASKED...

What's something that feels Southern but isn't?

On Facebook and Twitter, readers told us what non-Southern people, places, and things seem right at home around here.

Poutine. I mean, gravy, cheese, and french fries? How is that not Southern? Kalisa Hobbs Hyman

Canadian butter tarts were born to be baked in the South, @AlimoMorrison

Oreedence Clearwater Revival sounds straight from Muscle Shoals. @quamchata

Julia Child felt very Southern to me. Beth Yarbrough

Paw Paw, Michigan. The name and the low rolling hills seem like someplace out of the South. Paul Shibley

Shania Twain. Rodney Hale

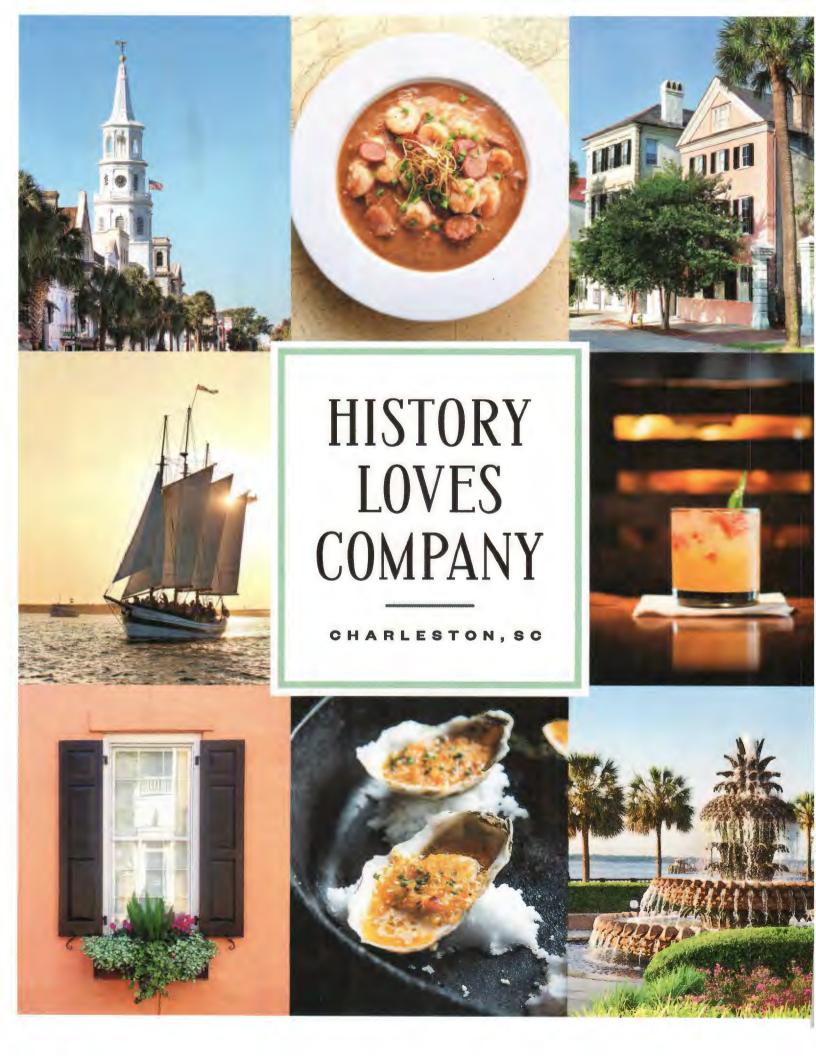
The farther north in Maine you go, the more Southern it feels. Rv Wills

Scrapple. It originated in Pennsylvania, but we're good at making and eating weird meat products down here,

Susan Kellett



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Carl Borick

DIRECTOR OF THE CHARLESTON MUSEUM

A HISTORIAN, PUBLISHED AUTHOR, AND OCCASIONAL TOUR GUIDE, CARL BORICK STEERS AMERICA'S OLDEST MUSEUM WITH PASSION AND CARE

or Carl Borick, curiosity has always been king. "The history bug bit me as a kid," says the Charleston Museum director. After earning his master's in history, he began his career at the museum in its administrative office in 1996, eventually transitioning to the role of assistant director in 2001. When the museum's longtime director retired in 2013. Borick was first in line for the job.

As America's first museum, the Charleston Museum plays a vital role in capturing the region's history. "I tell visitors to come here before they venture out into the city, because it will help them understand everything else they see," Borick says. Spanning ancient fossils to images and textiles, the institution's collection has been meticulously curated since 1773, sparking wonder in generations of patrons. "One of my favorite sounds is a school group in our lobby," he says. "That buzz of excitement...it's the sound of our mission."

After nearly twenty-five years, the director still lights up when discussing Lowcountry history. He leads a Top Tentour a few times a year, guiding visitors through his favorite pieces among the galleries. Sweetgrass basket fragments circa 1790 always make the list, their patterns closely resembling the work of the city's modern basket weavers. It's discoveries like these that bring Charleston's rich history to life. "They help us tell a deeper story of those who came before," he reflects.

Borick spends his workdays steeped in local history, and his time off takes a similar shape. "I've written a few books on Revolutionary War history, so I love visiting the Powder Magazine and the Old Exchange," he says. "The Ravenel Bridge is also one of the best vantage points for understanding naval operations during that time." On a night out, the director can be found at a downtown haunt like Coast Bar & Grill, but his greatest pleasure is simply strolling the streets. "I swear you can smell the history on the breeze."

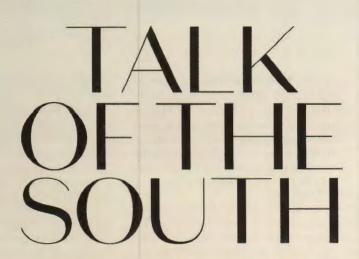
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YOUR GUIDE TO SOUTHERN CULTURE



SPORTING SCENE

Making Waves

GIGI LUCAS AND THE NONPROFIT SHE FOUNDED INSPIRE A NEW GENERATION OF SURFERS

By Nila Do Simon



TALKOF

n a Wednesday morning in October in Jacksonville Beach, Florida, with the sun still low on its ascent, GiGi Lucas looked up from her surfboard to see a Black man walking along the sand. As she popped up onto the board, he came to a halt and began staring at her in awe, "as if he were thinking, Wow, I've never

seen that before," Lucas says.

The "that" she refers to: an African American woman riding the waves, a rare vision among the sport's abundance of shaggy-blond-maned males, In Jacksonville Beach, Lucas says, she's often the sole female in the "lineup"-where surfers queue up for the next wave-and almost always the only Black female.

The African American community has long had a complicated relationship with the beach. The transatlantic Middle Passage that enslaved Africans endured still incites adverse reactions to the ocean. Add to that the societal pressures put on Black women to straighten their natural hair (salt water can damage relaxed hair), and a dip in the ocean becomes a hard ask. In Florida, Black people weren't even allowed on beaches until well into the twentieth century, when in 1935 the business leader Abraham Lincoln Lewis defied Jim Crow laws by buying three parcels of land to create the state's only Black beach resort town. American Beach, forty miles north of downtown Jacksonville, became a coastal retreat for a generation, including Ray Charles and Zora Neale Hurston, before a hurricane in 1964 destroyed several buildings and development and desegregation ensued.

Eighty-six years after American Beach's founding, Lucas is writing a new chapter in the beach saga, with an emphasis on access and inclusiveness. The Florida native, who is forty-one, grew up watching her parents compete in catamaran races and became drawn to the sense of adventure surrounding water sports. A chance outing seven years ago in Costa Rica introduced her to surfing, and she hasn't stopped since. "When I surf, I feel free," says Lucas, who goes out daily. "Surfing has taught me to be still and patient, to allow things that are bigger than me to take place in order for me to move forward."

In 2018, Lucas created Surfear NEGRA, a nonprofit set on diversifying the lineup through its sea and land programs for school-age girls. The group, whose name combines the words for to surf and Black in Spanish, sends girls who have little to no experience in the sport to surf camps across the country. So far, sixty-four girls have started shredding the waves thanks to the nonprofit, including Deyona Burton, a seventeen-year-old high school senior from Jacksonville. Encouraged by her mother to try out surfing, Burton took part in her first camp almost two years ago. She was the only Black attendee at the one-day camp, led by white instructors. As she was learning the mechanics of a surfboard. Burton remembers looking up and seeing someone with a face similar to hers. It was Lucas.

"When I met Miss GiGi on the beach, I thought, Wow, you're like me," Burton says. Though Burton has lived about twenty minutes from the beach her entire life, she never thought about surfing until the summer of 2019. No one in her family surfed, and Burton disliked the sport after her first try. Only when Lucas became her mentor did surfing grow on her. "Now, when I'm in the water, I have this belief that I can do anything," says Burton, who goes out most free weekends. "Surfing has made me feel that if I put my mind to something, I can accomplish it."

In December, Lucas expanded the reach of Surfear-NEGRA by partnering with three Jacksonville-area Boys & Girls Clubs to introduce youths to Surfear-NEGRA's :Surf the Turf! curriculum, which simulates the sport on land by using props such as yoga mats and skateboards. Lucas says she's working on rolling the program out to more clubs across the nation.

Though she didn't set out to be an activist, Lucas says she's accepted the role. As a founding member of Textured Waves, a surfing collective for people of color, Lucas starred in last summer's short film Sea Us Now, which reimagines classic surf culture with Black women as the main characters.

"We wanted to curate beautiful, stunning imagery of women who surf," Lucas says. "And hopefully, we've changed what the vision of 'surfer' looks like." G







Lucas says she's often the sole female in the "lineup"where surfers queue up for the next wave-and almost always the only Black female





TALKOF THE SOUTH

True Colors

LAURIN McCRACKEN'S VIVIDLY RENDERED STILL LIFES MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME

By Michael J. Mooney

aurin McCracken dabs his paintbrush into

a lukewarm jar of water, then into one of the five different shades of black he has on his palette. After testing the color on a scrap, he takes the brush to the three-hundredpound soft press Italian paper on his desk and makes four or five smooth, delicate strokes. "You can see the water soak into the fibers of the paper," he says, his native Mississippi brogue apparent in every word. He's about halfway through a still life: three blazingly bright clementines and a matte pewter tea set on a folded white cloth. Thin layers of tracing paper, secured with tape, protect most of the piece in progress, leaving only a small section exposed.

That's how McCracken works here in his Fort Worth, Texas, home studio: one minute detail at a time, creating paintings so vivid they seem closer to photographs. The lines at the edge of his Ball jars look so crisp, the shadows so stark. The crinkles in folded foil, the gleams of light reflecting off silver: All temporarily trick the human eye. In a piece he just finished, an image of loose silverware for sale in a water-stained cardboard box, blue sky reflects in the curves of spoons and knives.

McCracken, startlingly enough, didn't start painting until later in life. After a successful career as an

McCracken in his Fort Worth home

Top to bottom:

studio; at work

on a watercolor;

the style of the seventeenth-

century Dutch

painter Willem

Kalf hangs over

his paints and

brushes.

a still life in





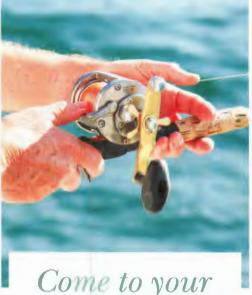
architect, a watercolor class he took at age sixty while living in Virginia transfixed him, and he went on to take classes at the Art Institute of Chicago. "Architects and watercolorists have a lot in common," he says. "It's about strategy and planning. I love breaking something down into accomplishable pieces that add up to something beautiful." McCracken, now seventy-eight, has done just that to create his still lifes: glass jars, silver teapots, antique toys, vintage typewriters, old cigar boxes. He captures the beauty of a bygone era. When he began, "nobody was painting silver and nobody was painting glass," he says. "I saw these things and thought it could be a modern-day Dutch still life." Curators agree: Galleries, museums, and exhibitions in North America, Europe, and Asia have hung his work.

One painting can take McCracken more than a hundred hours. His process starts with a camera: He'll arrange and photograph a composition that interests him, print his chosen image in high definition, and then project the picture onto the wall upstairs so he can trace it onto the thick Italian paper. Then he systematically replicates the color and shading of each tiny sliver.

To demonstrate how he gets his brushes to form such a fine point, he wets one, then flicks it toward the floor. When he brings the brush back up, the tip is sharper than a freshly shaved pencil. The key to keeping the white so bright on, say, a piece of reflecting glass or silver, is not painting it at all. He instead uses masking liquid to cover up those areas when he's working, then removes the mask when he's done.

His rapid ascent in the art world stuns him at times. "My retirement is more fun than my career," McCracken says. "I'm the guy who gets up every morning and pinches himself." Back in his studio, he touches his wrist to the paper to test the dampness, then adds a few more strokes of shading to the pewter bowl-creating a new reality, one tiny element after another. G











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A New Ranger in Town

JARED PADALECKI RESURRECTS A TEXAS TV ICON By Allison Glock

ared Padalecki has been playing the good guy since he was a teen, beginning with his portrayal of flop-haired, square-jawed Deanevery mom's vision of the perfect boyfriend on the beloved dramedy Gilmore Girls—and continuing to demon hunter and reluctant hero Sam Winchester on Supernatural, the longest-running fantasy series in American television. Now, the thirty-eight-yearold father of three is taking on the titular lead in Walker, a reboot of Walker, Texas Ranger. The role is close to his heart—the series,

filmed in part in his current hometown of Austin, tells the story of the state he adores. "This Walker, he toes the line a little more than Chuck [Norris]'s Walker did," says Padalecki of his embrace of another upright-gentleman role, adding, "Those are the characters I'm drawn to. Men who are flawed but trying to do the best they can." Men, in no small way, like himself.

You were born in San Antonio.

My parents still live in the house I grew up in. I loved my childhood. I'd bike, skateboard, play basketball, skin my knees, and jump fences. I was outside all the time. You'd play for an hour and then go drink some water out of the nearest spigot on the side of the house and go back to playing. We lived by a train track, so we'd go out there and try to set up a penny and let it get smushed or throw rocks at passing cars, which probably wasn't intelligent, but there wasn't a whole lot to do. My mother and father came from pretty simple upbringings, and they built a life and had some kids and now my brother is a surgeon, my sister is an architect, and I wear makeup for a living. [Laughs.]

What was the worst rule to break in your family?

If you were rude or misbehaved, you were going to be in trouble. My parents, understandably in my opinion, would punish us for that. My parents were at our plays and basketball games. They were very supportive. But they also refused to do everything for us. My household had a lot of discipline. What we call "Texas values."

Such as?

Treating people right, being kind. In Texas, possibly because of that heat, we do things at our own pace. It's not New York, where it's bang, bang, bang, get this done, get that done. When I did Gilmore Girls, I was working in L.A. It's beautiful and full of promise, but you'll see somebody and you're like, "Hey, how you doin'?" And they're like, "Good." And they move on. In Texas, you're crossing the street and you're like, "Hey, how you doin'?" You've nev-

Jared Padalecki,

photographed in

Austin, where he

series is filming.

lives and the Walker

er met this person and they go, "Well, as a matter of fact ... " You end up having a conversation. I'm not saying everything Texas has been in its past-and even is currently—is perfect by

any means. But the good I got from Texas I hope to instill in my children and keep with me for the rest of my life.

You moved back to your home state ten years ago.

Yeah. My wife [actress Genevieve Cortese Padaleckil and I settled in Austin. Other places certainly have a lot to offer. But they were never home for me. Here you know your neighbors. They drag our garbage cans back up to our house if they notice. We pick up their packages. There are always two kids from the neighborhood in my living room playing with my kids. "Hey Mr. Jared!" It feels like a family.

Do you see Texas as its own thing, Southern-wise?

I do. Most Texans I know, we call ourselves

"Southern," but we don't say we're "from the South," Texas is almost its own country. If you go to Europe and you say, "I'm from Oregon," they're like, "All right, I don't knowwhat that is." But if you say, "I'm from Texas," they're like, "Ooooh y'all, yeehaw, cowboy hats!" You tell somebody you're from Texas, they feel like they know you to some degree, and that's a cool feeling.

What do you want to teach your children? That you can compete to win every basketball game, to book every audition, to get the highest score on the test, and you can still be kind. You can be a gracious winner and a gracious loser. I don't think they need to learn two plus two right now. They'll learn that eventually. But they do need to learn how to be respectful to their teachers, how to show up on time, how to get along with friends in social circles, how to coexist. Because life is difficult, even when life is great.

What's something your father taught you about being a man?

My dad was always very quick to admit when he was wrong. Every time you can say, "That was my fault" or "I was incorrect," you are actually becoming a better person. Being quick to accept culpabili-

ty is a big part of who I try to be. There's something so wonderful about the feeling you get when you can say to somebody, "I'm sorry, no excuses, I won't let it happen again." There's something very free-

ing about taking responsibility. I falter, but I really strive to be a good person. And I try to forgive myself when I am not the person that I want to be.

Are you optimistic about the future?

Extremely. I feel like the entire world has been through something so unexpected and tragic. We have all suffered together in our own ways. And this is going to sound weird, but in a wonderful way I think a lot of us learned what we can still be grateful for. When everything is crashing down around you, you have to find purpose. And I want to keep on searching for that purpose. The way I see it is, if you think you have all the answers, then what's the point of living? I believe that if you haven't learned from whoever you're talking to, then you haven't been listening. @





MUSIC

Julien Baker's **Dark Magic**

THE FEARLESS SONGWRITER EMBRACES A BIGGER SOUND AND PULLS NO PUNCHES ON HER EXHILARATING THIRD ALBUM

By Matt Hendrickson

y dog has to pee," Julien Baker says almost apologetically. We've been talking for about ninety minutes, and the twenty-five-year-old Memphis native is affable and chatty on topics ranging from existential philosophy and music theory to how many cups of coffee she's had this morning. Her dog, Beans, is a

hound mix she adopted from a Nashville shelter, and for an artist known for penning first-person, emotionally draining songs, focusing her attention on Beans has been a revelation. As the adage goes, "Did I save the dog or did the dog save me?" Baker concedes it might be more of the latter.

Since her 2015 debut, Sprained Ankle (written in her dorm room at Middle Tennessee State), Baker has galvanized a legion of fans with songs that are extraordinarily personal but allow enough room for others to recognize their own experiences and hurt. Her live shows are hushed, communal affairs, the emotional haymakers often leaving attendees in tears. But after the success of her debut and her 2017 follow-up, Turn Out the Lights, what should have been the best of times for Baker turned into some of the worst.

At the end of 2018, she had just finished touring with fellow acclaimed songwriters Phoebe Bridgers and Lucy Dacus under the moniker boygenius. Though the trio gushed over the creative spark the collaboration had produced, for Baker, who has been open about her substance abuse and mental health struggles as a teen, the joy slipped away when she suffered a relapse that forced her to cancel shows and appearances over the following months. "I had been in this touring machine and everything had been going so fast for years," she says. "It was like a speeding bicycle that slowed down enough for the wheels to come off. So I just hung out with, like, butterflies that I barely knew because that is so much more comfortable than having to have a vulnerable conversation where you tell someone, 'I am not okay."

Steadying herself in the summer of 2019, Baker poured her experiences into writing the songs that make up her dazzling third album, Little Oblivions, a project she calls "dark as hell" but one that ultimately proved liberating. The album's weighty grandeur is juxtaposed with sparkling melodies and a keen pop sensibility. The opener, "Hardline," kicks off with wonky minor-key synth before evolving into what could be a Taylor Swift song sucked into a whirlwind of distortion, while "Song in E," with its tinkling piano, is one that Billie Eilish might wish she wrote.

"As a songwriter, she does a thing that's really hard, which is to be open, honest, and emotional without making any mistakes," says Grammy winner Jason Isbell, a longtime fan who empathizes with Baker's ups and downs. "It's hard to write about depression and love and addiction without falling into clichés. Even some of the best songwriters, I think, just go ahead and let the clichés stand because they're trying to get to the truth. She doesn't fall into those tropes.'

The most distinctive feature of the album, though, is that Baker has added a fuller sound to her arsenal, including banjo, mandolin, and, for the first time, drums, rather than the spare guitar and piano of her previous efforts. She's opened the door another crack, revealing a richer self-portrait. "I still have this crazy control hang-up for some reason," she says. "But I didn't realize how much I missed collaborating with other people."

Baker is understandably wary of characterizing Little Oblivions as a redemption project. She declines to give specifics on the events of 2019, though she knows she can be way too hard on herself. "My therapist says I'm the person with the least amount of self-compassion she's ever seen," she says wryly. But she's grateful that she's been given time to focus on her well-being-and on Beans (who now really needs to be let out). She muses about getting another dog, which she'd name Cornbread, of course. "I never really got the dog thing," she says. "I was like, yeah, animals, cute. But they're love in its best form. She's not even particularly good. She's not particularly obedient. But I still have this unexplainable bond to her. She's taught me a lot about myself." @

Mardi Gras Grooves

Cha Wa brings the NOLA funk



Cha Wa MY PEOPLE

Blending funk, blasting horns, and pulsing Afroheat rhythms the New Orleans band Cha Wa's blistering new album, My People, out this March, is as vibrant as a Fat Tuesday jaunt through the Garden District. Fronted by Joseph Boudreaux Jr., Cha Wa showcases the traditions of Mardi Gras Indians, mostly Black oommunity members known for their music. dialect, and legendary costumes and headdresses that explode in a rainbow of colors. The title track is an instant parade classic, with a shout-along ohorus, and the band's energy is relentless throughout. It will make you yearn for the Big Easy's smoldering streets.-M.H.

Baker's new album, Little Oblivions, is out in February.



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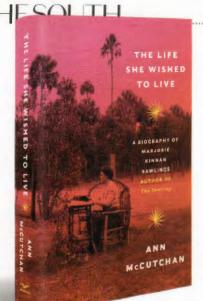
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BOOKS

The Queen of Cross Creek

BEYOND THE YEARLING, A NEW BIOGRAPHY UNEARTHS THE REAL MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS

By Jonathan Miles

n 1928, on close to a whim, a fledgling New York writer named Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings used an inheritance to purchase-sight unseen-a seventy-two-acre farm and run-down orange grove in Cross Creek, in the central Florida backwoods, Floridians and middle-school readers may recall the rest of the story. Rawlings (1896-1953) fell head over heels for this humid, palmetto'ed landscape and a decade later was embroidering vivid depictions of its flora, fauna, and folkways into two magnificent books: Cross Creek (1942), a memoir, and The Yearling (1938), a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel that established Rawlings as a seminal figure in Florida literature, the Willa Cather of the Cracker scrubland, the queen of Floridiana.

In The Life She Wished to Live, the first major biography of Rawlings in more than a quarter century, Ann McCutchan tells the rest of the rest of the story: the friction with her snobbish mother that seeded Rawlings's desire for a roughshod, outré existence; her fortuitous alliance with the legendary editor Maxwell Perkins, whose stable of authors included Hemingway and Fitzgerald; the "weekend marriage" she enjoyed with her second husband, granting her the mental elbow room for her writing; and the lawsuit from an offended Cross Creek local, stung by Rawlings's portrayal, that dragged on for five years and so soured Rawlings that she never wrote about Cross Creek again. Rawlings

cleared her path through life as though armed with a machete; McCutchan, gracefully, records every chop.

The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings that emerges is ornery in the best sense, like a salty aunt who the adults all fear but the teenagers adore. She was as adept at hunting alligators in Alachua County swamps as she was at arguing philosophy with Thomas Wolfe in a New York dive bar. She drank, smoked, cussed, and drove the rural back roads so recklessly that her car wrecks almost constitute a running gag in the book. (Rawlings defended herself, not quite deftly, by claiming she drove "with deliberate slowness when I have had a good many drinks.") Much like Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Yearling is nowadays considered children's literature, because of its twelve-year-old protagonist, but Rawlings didn't write it as such, nor was the novel initially received that way. (Ellen Glasgow, the then dovenne of Southern lit, deemed it "genius.") It's got dark crannies. Its characters live on the knife edge of subsistence. The novel caught the mood of a nation in much the way John Lomax's field recordings and Walker Evans's photographs would. Depression-era readers embraced not its softness but its grit.

Rawlings's political awakening began with a strain of frustrated feminism. "There are times when I resent-almost to madness-being a woman," she wrote in a letter. "I want to be a solitary fighter, loving no one, with no one loving me." Later, it expanded to include environmentalism and racial justice. The greatest impact on the latter was the friendship Rawlings sparked with Zora Neale Hurston in the 1940s. Hurston, the author of Their Eyes Were Watching God, challenged Rawlings's squishy views on race, helping her to "take the final step in my own liberation from prejudice," as Rawlings later wrote. But Hurston also admired Rawlings's work. About Cross Creek, Hurston wrote her, "You have written the best thing on Negroes of any white writer who has ever lived." This smacks of affectionate hyperbole until one sizes up the competition and realizes how little existed. Another fan of the book, a young Coast Guard steward serving in the Pacific, wrote Rawlings to say what an inspiration it was. His name was Alex Haley: the author, decades later, of Roots and The Autobiography of Malcolm X.

What set Rawlings apart was, I think, a kind of hyperattentive empathy. She listened deeply and earnestly to the people of Cross Creek, Black and white. (So deeply, in fact, that the Dictionary of American Regional English includes almost two hundred usages culled from herwork.) She sought precision and dignity in how she portrayed them. As importantly, she watched and listened to the landscape they inhabited, the whistle of pines in a storm and the rattle of fallen magnolia leaves on a roof, her antennae tuned to the subtle ways the land influenced its people and, in turn, how they affected the land. Because "the joining of person to place, as of person to person," she wrote, "is a commitment to shared sorrow, even as to shared joy." G



Dining on a Dream

What it takes to keep a restaurant running

"Neither of us had opened a restaurant before, we were not from Savannah, and we had a very young and inexperienced staff," writes Mashama Bailey in Black, White, and the Grey (Lorena Jones Books), the riveting memoir of sorts she coauthored with John O. Morisano, her partner at the celebrated Grev restaurant. "Thank goodness we never stepped back to view it from 10.000 feet." In a back-and-forth style, they now take the long view to share how Bailey, a Black chef with Georgia roots, and Morisano, a freewheeling Italian American entrepreneur, took a delicious dare, Each ohapter ends with a personal recipe. including some from their grandmothers and one for the Paper Plane, the Grey's perfect bourbon-based aperitivo.-CJ Lotz



■ Have a burning question? Email editorial@gardenandgun.com



ASK G&G

Eau de Chapeau

CAP CARE, WASP UPSIDES, AND MARDI GRAS AT HOME
By Guy Martin





Should you ever wash a favorite hat?

Just a few months ago, I'd have suggested you get in touch with a good shrink or a trusty preacher to counselyou out of that heresy. Hats-particularly ones that have enjoyed years of outings-are sacred tools in the kit. Touch them with soap? A thousand times no. Obviously, we all clean our guns, rods, and reels, just as we sponge the blood and feathers out of jacket pockets and brush mud off boots. But a recent domestic debate provided me with nuance on washing a hat. To wit: One favored cotton fishing hat has seen action in the Florida Keys, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Europe. Its nicks and frays are the proud record of its battles. Once dark green, the thing has settled to a soft dove gray. The inch-wide sweat-and-grease stain at the crown took a decade for me to curate. Many fish, much sun: It had attained field-hat perfection. But around the house, its reception had grown less fond, to the point that, like a prisoner of war selected for delousing, it was frog-marched to the laundry. My beloved partner's position was: "That thing is revolting." I had visions of disaster, but the hat emerged whole, if with a shade less soul, and tighter, like a pair of jeans. The idea of washing a hat still gives me the heebie-jeebies, but domestic harmony is sometimes worth its sacrifices. Especially if you're grinding other hats into perfect shape.

Already dreading the serial assaults of hornworms and their ilk on this spring's kitchen garden. Tips? By evoking this enemy, we take you to mean that your tomatoes, the holiest of Southern fruits, were targeted last year. Before you reach for the old-school carbaryl-the nerve agent that paralyzes pests while doing a number on your own system-take an early spring evening to dip into the third-century B.C. Sanskrit political canon. The Arthaśāstra is a treatise on statecraft, economics, and military strategy attributed to the Indian scholar Kautilya, a.k.a. Vishnugupta, a.k.a. Chanakya, While Kautilya wouldn't seem to have much to offer on marauding hornworms laying waste to your prize Cherokee Purples, his point is a tactical onenamely, that the enemy of your enemy is your friend. Consider engaging an armada of Trichogramma, headof-a-pin-sized parasitic wasps and the tomato hornworms' dread adversary. Trichogramma lay their eggs inside the moth's eggs, which then, having nourished the wasp larvae, "wake up dead." Bye-bye, Mr. Hornworm! Trichogramma come in egg form, attached by the thousands to cards you strew about as soon as you see moths. Once hatched, the wasps begin their own hunt for cozy moth-egg birthing beds. Ordering a half million or so Trichogramma means you've attained a peculiar farm rank: You're the newly minted squadron leader of your own microscopic-insect air force.

Thinking about moseying on down I-10 to New Orleans for the fat days this year. Reckon I oughta? Scylla and Charybdis time, bay-bee. This rocky question is one we'll face regarding every enjoyable occasion for some time. Fortunately, New Orleans has reined it in by canceling parades. The Quarter and the Marigny might be open, but our stalwart Anthony Fauci rules: Less maundering, less drinking, less howling at the moon, okay? For our New Orleans and Mobile brethren, Mardi Gras is not the one mad day, it's a season. Stage a gentler staycation for you and yours. Duck season just flew by; cook a friendly pot of duck-and-andouille gumbo. Your pièce de résistance will be your playlist. Scare up some Jelly Roll Morton to set you right, temper with Allen Toussaint, Kermit Ruffins and the Barbecue Swingers, King Oliver, Irma Thomas, the Neville Brothers, the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Louis Armstrong, any Marsalis, Jon Batiste, and salt in a touch of Fats Domino's silky baritone. When it's time to twerk and wail in the living room, Professor Longhair. Among the young 'uns, go for Tank and the Bangas, Eric Vogel, Raja Kassis. The list is endless because nothing-no hurricane, no virus-can stop the cradle of American music from rocking steady. @

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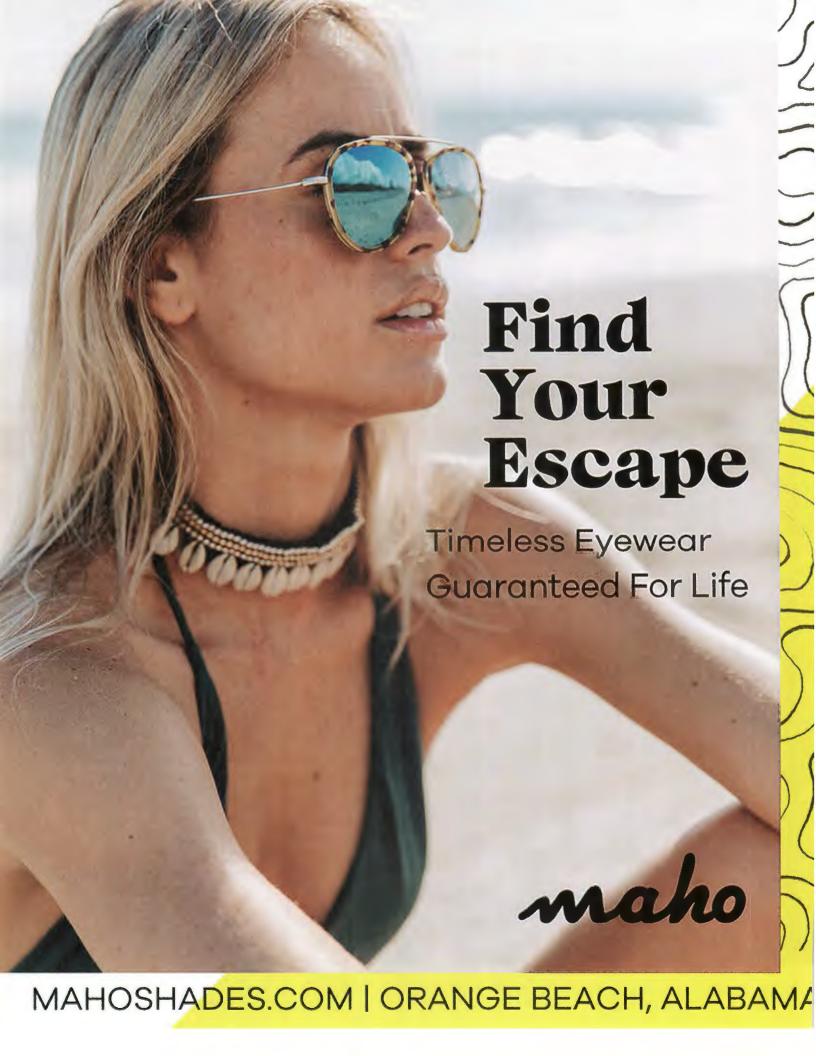


SOUTHERN FOCUS

New Orleans, Louisiana

Photograph by Chris Granger

"Walking through Mardi Gras World is like seeing a who's who of the past," says the New Orleans photographer Chris Granger of the open-to-the-public warehouses at Kern Studios, which has been turning out parade floats-including this grinning Ben Franklin sandwiched between the Three Stooges and NFL players-since 1947. "When I look back at this shot," Granger says, "it just comes to life; I can hear the floats rumbling and the people screaming for beads." Blaine Kern, the founder of Mardi Gras World, passed away in June at age ninety-three, but NOLA's parades (although on hold this year) testify to his enduring contribution to float design. "He embodied the spirit of Mardi Gras, and he left his mark on it," says Granger, who photographed Kern several times over the years. "Maybe this year will be a time to reflect on his legacy, and since you can't go to the parades, pay a visit to Mardi Gras World." G



A CELEBRATION OF SOUTHERN FOOD AND DRINK

ANATOMY OF A CLASSIC

Duck and Waffles

ATLANTA'S DEBORAH VANTRECE PUTS A GLOBALLY INSPIRED SPIN ON A SOUL-FOOD FAVORITE

By Kim Severson





MEETTHE CHEF: **EBORAH** VANTRECE

Hometown: Kansas City, Missouri

What she'd grab if the house was on fire: Autographed menus from a transformational meal at Charlie Trotter's in Chicago. 'Trotter used a lot of products I had grown up with that no one ever used in that manner. I was amazed to see oxtails on his menus."

Advice to young cooks: "People need to understand that the most basic recipe done well can turn into a masterpiece. We often think we need to shoot for the foie gras and the caviar for it to be special. You don't."

earning to cook came naturally for Deborah VanTrece. The owner of Twisted Soul Cookhouse & Pours in Atlanta with her wife. Lorraine, and daughter, Kursten, she spent childhood afternoons watching her grandmother at the stove. There was the aunt who made perfect neck bones, and another who had macaroni and cheese down to a science. Her dad was often at the grill, and her mother would head right to the kitchen after work, "I liked to eat, they cooked well, and I paid attention," she says.

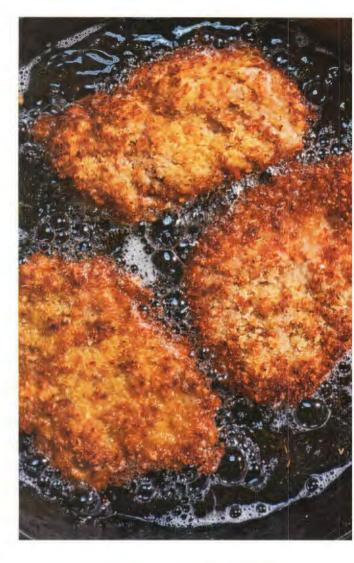
VanTrece left home to become a flight attendant, eventually moving to Atlanta to get married. She had always loved to cook, so when flight attendants went on strike in 1993, it seemed like the obvious answer. After culinary school, she worked as the executive chef for a catering company during the Olympic Games in Atlanta. That led to more jobs cooking for dignitaries and international customers, and she expanded her repertoire to the cuisine that has made Twisted Soula favorite: dishes rooted in the soul food she grewup eating married with comfort food from around the globe.

One of her favorite jobs came in the late 1990s, when she cooked for the German consul in Atlanta. He and his wife liked a mix of cuisines, but they always appreciated a good Schweineschnitzel, made by pounding cuts of pork loin thin, coating them in bread crumbs, and quickly frying the cutlets until crisp. "To me, it was the equivalent of country-fried steak in the South," VanTrece says. And it became her inspiration for a sophisticated but simple take on chicken and waffles that stars pounded duck breast on top of a sweet potato waffle scented with vanilla and cardamom.

She came up with the idea while working on her first cookbook, The Twisted Soul Cookbook: Modern Soul Food with Global Flavors, out this March, She knew that a duck breast would take well to the schnitzel treatment, and because duck pairs nicely with something earthy and sweet, sweet potatoes were a natural building block for the waffles.

For cooks new to pounding out duck breast, she advises a light hand. It takes less pressure to flatten duck breast than it does chicken. After the breasts sit in the refrigerator in a generous sprinkle of seasonings, cooking takes only a few minutes. "You're almost just putting some color on them," she says. For the waffle batter, she bakes and mashes the sweet potato, leaving a little texture so the waffles have a bit more structure. (She even uses canned sweet potatoes if she's short on time.) To finish, she suggests drizzling a little maple syrup or adding a dollop of peach jam. Some orange marmalade thinned out with water and heated until syrupy also brings some fruity sweetness to the party.

The dish is exactly what Van Trece hopes to achieve when she cooks: recipes that draw on the best of tradition while offering something new. "I'm always picking up ideas," she says. "And schnitzel is one of those things that just stays in your mind." G



Duck Schnitzel and Sweet Potato Waffles

Yield: 4 servings

For the duck: **INGREDIENTS** 2 large duck breasts, split in half, skin removed 11/2 tsp. Lawry's seasoned salt 11/2 tsp. onion powder 1½ tsp. garlic powder 11/2 tsp. pepper 1/4 cup all-purpose flour 2 eggs, beaten 3/4 cup panko bread crumbs 11/2 tsp. herbes de Provence 1/2 tsp. kosher salt Vegetable oil for frying



PREPARATION

Place each duck breast between 2 pieces of plastic wrap. Using a meat mallet, gently pound each breast until it's about 1/4 inch thick.

In a small bowl, combine the Lawry's, onion powder, garlic powder, and pepper. Sprinkle this seasoning on both sides of duck breasts, place them in a resealable plastic bag, and refrigerate for at least 4 hours.

While duck is in the fridge, make the waffle batter (recipe follows).

When you're ready to cook the duck, add the flour to a shallow bowl. Place the beaten egg in a separate bowl. In a third bowl, combine bread crumbs, herbes de Provence. and kosher salt.

Dredge each duck breast in flour, dip in the egg, and then dredge in the bread crumbs. Using your fingers, press the bread orumbs lightly into the breast to coat completely. Transfer the breast to a platter.

In a large skillet, heat 1/4 inch of vegetable oil over medium-high heat. Place no more than 3 breasts at a time in the hot oil. Cook the breasts 2 to 3 minutes on each side, or until golden brown. Transfer the cooked schnitzel to a paper-towellined tray to drain.

For the waffles: **INGREDIENTS**

I cup cooked, mashed sweet potatoes (about I large sweet potato, baked) ½ cup milk legg yolk 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted

2 tbsp. light brown sugar 1/4 tsp. ground cardamom 1/4 tsp. vanilla extract I cup all-purpose flour 11/2 tsp. baking powder 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon 1/2 tsp. salt 3 egg whites

PREPARATION

Preheat an 8-inchdiameter waffle iron (the goal is to make 4 waffles, but the recipe can be adjusted for different-sized

waffle irons).

In a bowl, combine sweet potatoes, milk, egg yolk, melted butter, brown sugar, cardamom, and vanilla extract. Whisk together until well blended.

In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, oinnamon, and salt. Add the sweet potato mixture to the flour mixture and blend well.

In another bowl, use a stand or hand mixer to beat the egg whites to stiff peaks. In 3 parts, fold the egg whites into the batter and gently mix until

well blended.

If your waffle iron is prone to sticking, spray it with nonstick cooking spray or wipe it lightly with butter. Working quickly, pour batter onto the waffle iron and spread it with a spatula. The mixture will be thick, so spread evenly. Close the waffleiron and ocok 3 to 5 minutes, or until the waffle is golden and crisp and separates easily from the iron.

To serve, place 1 duck schnitzel atop each waffle and drizzle with your favorite jam or syrup.

Gold in These Fields

A NEW RELATIVE OF CAROLINA GOLD RICE CROPS UP

Chalmers as he waves his hand over a marshy field near Hardeeville, South Carolina. Gumbo stew goes well over rice, sure, but the gumbo he means is soil-a mix of mud and clay where rice plants thrive. Chalmers steps down a bank toward vellow stalks of Carolina

descendant of this heirloom rice, one inspired by a variety not harvested in these parts since 1862.

In the early 1800s, near South Carolina's Santee River, the planter Joshua John Ward found a lone panicle of strikingly long rice and developed it into a version of Carolina Gold soon grown all over the region, largely by enslaved laborers. "With grains measuring up to halfan inch in length, Long Gold rice became the most highly and widely esteemed American rice," says David Shields, a culinary historian at the University of South Carolina. "But the Civil War disrupted the complicated seed management that kept the variety viable,"

That is, until Anna McClung, who directs the Dale Bumpers National Rice Research Center in Stuttgart, Arkansas, began reintroducing historic Lowcountry grains bred to be stronger than their ancestors. To create a new rendition of Long Gold-one with the vanilla and hazelnut notes that have made chefs love Carolina Gold-McClung's team crossed the latter with even longerrice, and bred it for disease resistance and shorter stalks to withstand wind. "Rice moved away from the East Coast, not only because of the war," McClung says, "but because of competition in the Mid-South, as well as the hurricanes that went through." Irony has a way: As McClung and her team prepared to harvest their years-long experiment last summer, the remnants of beautifully," McClung says.

This spring, farmers including Chalmers will trial the new hybrid seeds. With harvest success, the heirloom grain purveyor Anson Mills plans to bag up the longer rice for mail order in late summer and donate profits to its project supporting Sea Island agricultural development. Written on each sack will be McClung's name for her creation, a nod to the river on whose banks the story of American rice began: Santee Gold. G



and Long Gold disappeared.

Hurricane Laura passed through. "But our rice stood







To create a new rendition of Long Gold—one with the vanilla and hazelnut notes that have made chefs love Carolina Gold-Anna McClung's team crossed the latter with even longer rice



From top: A field of Carolina Gold near Hardeeville, South Carolina: readu-tocook Carolina Gold, the ancestor of the new Santee Gold rice. Opposite: Farmer Rollen Chalmers, who will soon sow Santee Gold.





Ojen Frappé Yield: I cocktail

INGREDIENTS

21/2 oz. Legendre Oien 8-10 dashes Peychaud's bitters, plus 2-3 dashes forgarnish

PREPARATION Combine Ojen and

bitters in a mixing glass with ice and stir until well blended and chilled. Strain into a double highball glass filled with crushed ice. Add 2-3 dashes of Pevchaud's on top for garnish.

8-10 dashes of

Carnival in a Glass

A COCKTAIL FOR YOUR MARDI GRAS AT HOME

By Wayne Curtis

few years ago, I came across one of those irresistible Web quizzes. This one claimed, "We know if you like black licorice with just one question!" Oh, really? I clicked, of course. The question: "Are you eighty years old?"

Licorice doesn't get enough respect for a flavor that apparently takes eight

decades to fully appreciate. In any event, New Orleans has some age on it. The city had a well-documented fondness for licorice-inflected absinthe when it was legal before 1912, and licorice-inflected Herbsaint when absinthe was banned for about a century after that. And those licorice notes remain an integral component of the Sazerac, the city's official cocktail.

New Orleans also developed an abiding fondness for Ojen, a sweet Spanish liqueur with prominent black licorice notes and roots in the nineteenth century. According to Southern Comforts: Drinking and the U.S. South. Oien once starred in the famed frappé served at Brennan's, which opened in 1946 in the French Quarter. The restaurant touted its Ojen frappé as "the preferred absinthe of the Spanish aristocracy."

Aristocracy attracts aspiring aristocrats. Soon the Krewe of Rex, one of the city's preeminent Mardi Gras organizations, embraced the Ojen frappé as Carnival's cocktail. Despite its popularity in New Orleans, however, Ojen lost the interest of the rest of the world and devolved into a regional curiosity. In the early 1990s, a British firm acquired the distillery, and shortly announced it would cease production of Ojen.

The Rex crowd, distraught, devised a work-around. With the aid of a city wine merchant, they asked the distillery to produce one more run of Ojen, the entirety of which was shipped to New Orleans. Those hundreds of cases were meted out from a warehouse and helped maintain order in the city for years. Then, about a decade ago, supplies started to dwindle; Ojen bottles began selling for upwards of a hundred dollars on the black market. That's when the New Orleans-based Sazerac Company stepped into the breach. The outfit reverse engineered the liqueur in the lab, and five years ago rolled out its own version: Legendre Ojen, which by general consensus makes for a worthy facsimile.

Mardi Gras will be celebrated in a much-diminished fashion on February 16. But don't let that hamper your own celebration. Make an Ojen frappé at home. Swizzle until frosted. Toast the day, a brighter year ahead, and your sophisticated octogenarian friends.

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WHAT'S IN SEASON

Cast-Iron Buds

A PITMASTER'S SECRET FOR NO-FAIL, PERFECTLY CRISPY BRUSSELS SPROUTS

By Jenny Everett

hen it comes to brussels sprouts, it was not love at first bite for the Nashville-based pitmaster Pat Martin, "Asakid, lloved vegetables, but I didn't like okra and I didn't like brussels," says the owner of Martin's Bar-B-Que Joint and Hugh-Baby's BBQ & Burger Shop. But then he met his

now wife, Martha Ann, who won over his heart-and belly. "It's her favorite vegetable, and she makes great brussels," he says. "So now they're one of my favorites, and I love to make them for her." His go-to preparation involves crisping them in a cast-iron skillet (see recipe). "It's one of those things you can't beat cast iron on," Martin says. "While I've gotten to appreciate them just as they are, shaved in a salad, for example, I really think brussels are better when they have a little acidity and spice, and a lot of char. I like to get them good and crispy." The late-winter cabbage made it to the United States via French settlers who landed in Louisiana in the eighteenth century. The edible buds grow on a stalk and are best purchased that way, rather than separated, to ensure freshness. They'll keep for about a week in the refrigerator until you're ready to get cooking. Martin's secret to crispy goodness is to give the sprouts a mini cure-he salts them and lets them sit for a few hours before cooking to draw out excess moisture. Once crisped, they make an outstanding side dish with just about any protein-barbecue included. "Just like whole hog is better cooked on a block pit than anything else, same goes for brussels sprouts and cast iron," Martin says. "It's just the way God meant it to be." G



THE CHEF RECOMMENDS:

Martha Ann's Brussels

Yield: 4-6 servings

INGREDIENTS

24 brussels sprouts, halved lengthwise 2 tsp. kosher salt, divided 1-2 tbsp. olive oil I tsp. red pepper flakes I lemon, zested

PREPARATION Place brussels

sprouts on a wire rack over a baking sheet. Sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt and let them sit for 2 to **3hours Remove** and pat dry with a paper towel. Heat a cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Lightly toss sprouts in oil, remaining teaspoon of salt, and red

pepper flakes. Place them in the skillet, cut side down. After 2 minutes, flip and cook an additional 3 minutes. Flip again and cook for 1 more minute. Remove sprouts and place in a serving bowl. Toss with lemon zest and additional salt totaste





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A New Taste of Macon

KIMCHI FACTORY BRINGS RENEWED ENERGY AND VIBRANT FLAVORS TO A REVIVED DOWNTOWN LANDMARK







s I drive into downtown Macon, Georgia, the familiar arrow-shaped Len Berg's sign heaves into view, pointing down the alley to the old brick shoebox of a restaurant. Founded in 1908, closed in 2005, Len Berg's was famous across the state for fried chicken in a lacy crust, creamy fried corn, buttered early peas, and house-

From left: Spicy beef

soup; owner Miyang

Sunny; kimbap rolls,

braised green beans.

and kimchi.

Kim and her daughter

churned peach ice cream. My father, who worked on the other side of the alley, treated me to lunch

there when I was a boy. On the way out, we took turns mashing the buzzer by the door with the sign that read, PRESS BUTTON TO PRAISE COOK.

Each time I return to Macon, I drive this way. For the longest time, the old Len Berg's stood empty. More than once, false

hope bloomed. In 2012 a couple with the last name Lee opened Lee Berg's in the same spot. They didn't last long, in part because they pulled out the old counter and put in a buffet. Fried chicken dies a soggy death on a steam table.

This time, belief pays off. Below the big white arrow, still embossed with the old Len Berg's logo, a smaller sign reads, GRAND OPENING. Atop the building, a larger arrow points downward, heralding KIMCHI FACTORY.

Things didn't begin well for the restaurant. On opening day last summer, Miyang Kim fed a probation officer who walked across the street from his office and a repairman who came to fix the walk-in and went home with an order of bibimbap. Just two customers, and only one paid. But word of Kimchi Factory spread quickly. By week two, Kim and her daughters Grace and Sunny, who wait tables and run the register,

> struggled to keep up with the customers who arrived to see what had become of Len Berg's, stayed to eat the restaurant's namesake dish, and pushed the modern version of that buzzer, lighting up social media. "Teenagers who dated here come back with the families they made," Miyang Kim tells me when I introduce myself. Head

wrapped in a bright red bandanna, she leans in to say, "People show me pictures. This is a big responsibility, to open a new restaurant here."

The Kims have retained some of the Len Berg's touchstones. The vintage color-block front windows that looked discordant on a meat-and-three now appearlike modern flourishes installed by a hip architect. Once dim and jammed with portraits of Confederate

Musical Diner

A Macon spot for biscuits, chili burgers, and memories

Decorated with memorabilia that spans local music heroes Otis Redding and Wet Willie, Famous Mike's tells the story of owner Mike Seekins's hometown. A lifelong Allman Brothers Band fan, he fries pork chop biscuits and griddles chili slaw burgers, naming dishes for Allman players and songs and using a common love of music to connect the people of Macon and create a downtown hub.-J.T.E.

generals, the warren of small dining rooms now glows a luminous red. Tiny clay sculptures, shaped by Kim's youngest daughters, Meju and Yeju, stare back.

Truetoher restaurant name, Kimis very good at kimchi, the spicy fermented vegetable mixture often made with cabbage. Dumplings stuffed with kimchi and glass noodles come in a lustrous dough that turns translucent in the steamer. Dipped in a mix of soy sauce and vinegar, they taste light and bright. Kimchijeon, pancakes stirred with kimchi and green onion, arrive crunchy at the rim and creamy at the core. Dunked in that soy and vinegar mix and enjoyed with a brown-bagged bottle of white wine, those pancakes might be the best thing on a menu packed with good stuff.

Kim's skill with kimchi dishes was bornin Gwangju, her hometown at the foot of the Sobaek Mountains in the southwestern corner of South Korea. Long a base for the best kimchi makers in the country, the city now hosts the World Institute of Kimchi, where researchers study fermentation and kimchi's possible benefits for everything

from brain function to hair loss.

At Kimchi Factory, the roster of main dishes goes deep. After two lunches and a dinner, here's what I know: Instead of galbi, pork ribs served here on a sizzling platter like fajitas, try one of the soups or stews, like sundubu-jjigae, made with soft tofu and pork. Or knife-cut noodles, served in a subtle stock that bobs with black mussels and pink shrimp.

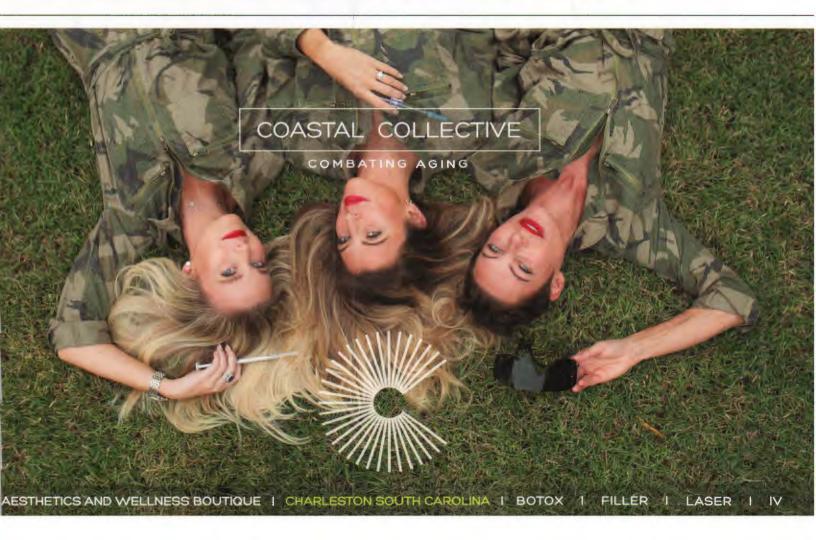
I default twice to bibimbap. A jumble of rice and squid and vegetables, seasoned with sesame oil, my favorite version here arrives in a heated stone bowl, capped with a fried egg. Pierce the yolk, squirt chile paste from an oversize bottle, and a rich sauce coalesces, ideal for soaking up that rice.

After Kim immigrated in 1994, she cooked the foods of her birthplace to centerherself, first in Mississippi, then in Georgia. As she fell asleep each night, she tasted through her mother's recipes, searching memories for ingredients and techniques. Cooking at the fellowship hall of a Korean Presbyterian church in suburban Atlanta, she befriended women from other parts

of her home country. In a room full of good cooks, her kimchi stood out. Just as it did when she later worked in the cafeteria of the Kia plant in West Point, Georgia.

In America, Kim has faced down big challenges, including two divorces and a car wreck that nearly killed her and required a hip replacement. Driving the first time to Macon, to take a job cooking and cleaning for Korean workers at the Kumho Tire facility, she saw new possibilities in this once-beleaguered city, now in the midst of a downtown renaissance.

Kim brings big dreams to her small restaurant. She wants to grow it into a franchise and build a mission to give back to this city that has given so much to her. "This place is a big tree," she says of Macon. "And now I live here under that tree, safe and happy." As I reach to pour cups of chrysanthemum tea, she reaches for another metaphor that speaks to the possibilities of this city in this moment. "Macon looked messy when I got here," she tells me, her big smile pressing against her small mask. "Now it's breathing again."



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SOUTHERN STYLE

Keepsake Keepers

TIMELESS OPTIONS FOR SHOWCASING THE MEMENTOS OF YOUR LIFE

By Haskell Harris

TREASURES CHEST

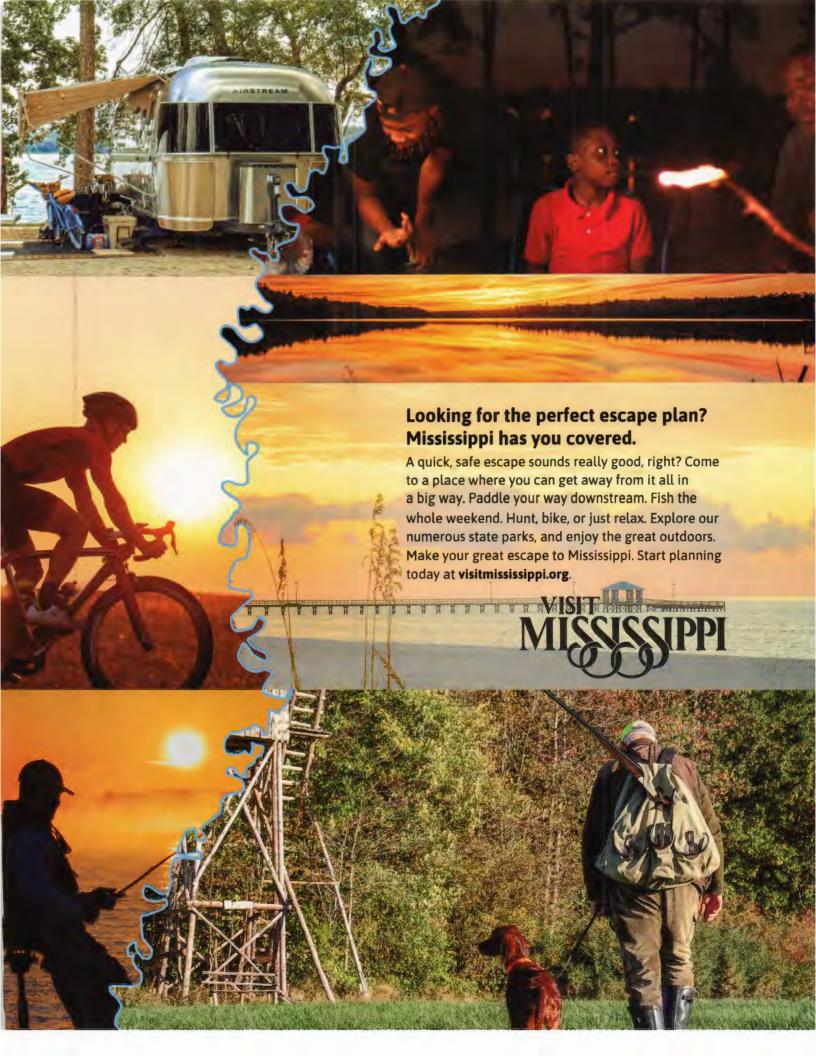
Though hope chests began as places for women to store their trouss caux, many Southerners now use the trunks to collect all manner of memorabilia, from love letters and childhood toys to heirloom linens and family albums.
This Selamat Designs trunk, featuring both exterior and interior art by the beloved British designer William Morris, offers an especially charming resting spot for all of the above (\$1,250; perigold.com).

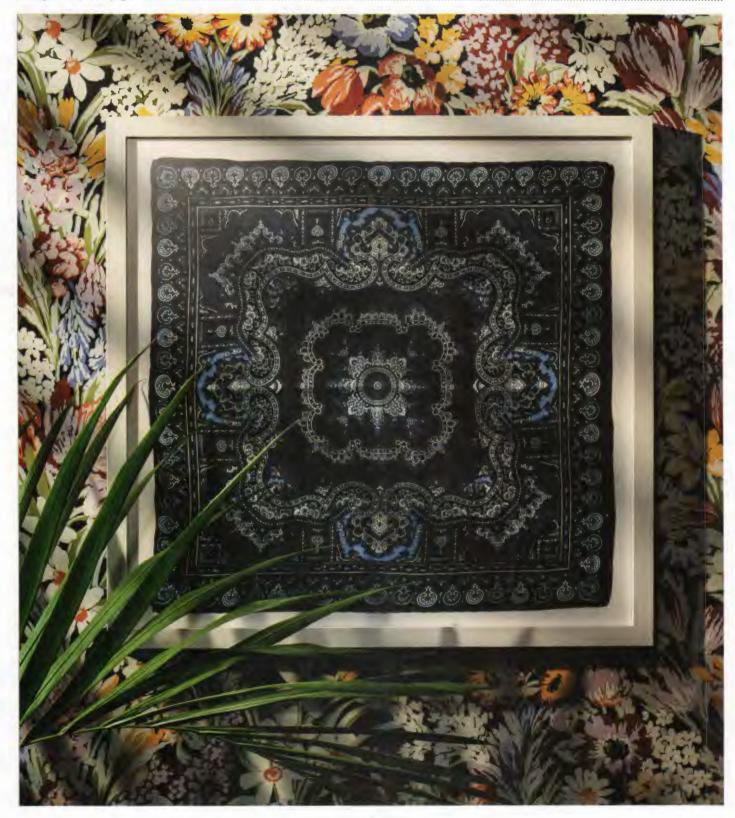


CLOSE to the HEART

The jewelry designer Monica Rich Kosann collected antique lockets—and other lovely objects in which to display and carry photographs, including this cigarette case she fitted with family images—long before she began dreaming up modern spins on the pendants. The intimacy of those antiques informs her sophisticated designs, such as her own monogrammed oval above, which holds photos of her husband, daughters, grandson, and late father.

She nicknamed the smaller pendant her Jack locket, in honor of her grandson, who always checks to make sure she's wearing "him." Both lockets are part of her collection, and image fitting on her website is a cinch (\$10,850 and \$1,375, respectively; monicarichkosann.com).





HANG IT UP

Why keep your grandfather's beloved bandanna or a passed-through-the-generations scarf in a drawer when you can feature it as a work of art? Simply Framed specializes in displaying such textiles, and the process is easy: Choose a frame style from the website, mail the item of choice, and soon your piece will return, ready to hang (\$130 and up; simply framed.com).





SCRAPBOOK of LIFE
In the age of digital everything, scrapbooking has become a rarer pastime. Not so at Scriptura in New Orleans, which offers scrapbooks that will endure, including these clothbound versions in which waxed paper protects each thick page. With the aid of paper corners, you can create a priceless object for this generation and the next, overflowing with photos, concert tickets, newspaper clippings, and other manifestations of memories (\$45-\$200; scriptura.com).



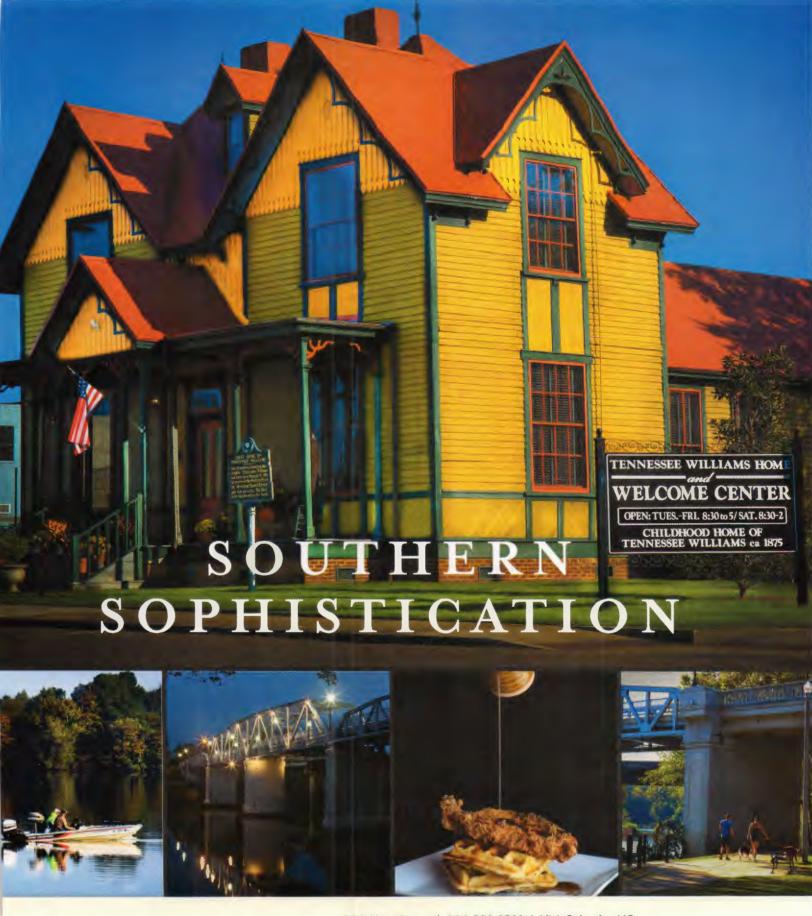
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MADE IN THE SOUTH

Turkey Talkers

FROM HIS SMALL WORKSHOP IN CHATSWORTH, GEORGIA, ANTHONY ELLIS TURNS OUT SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S FINEST TRUMPET CALLS

By David Joy

he call itself looks simple enough-a turned wooden barrel and mouthpiece fitted together by a small metal ferrule so that the shape mirrors that of a miniature clarinet. But any hunter who has ever attempted to coax a turkey into gun range with a trumpet knows that this is the hardest call to master. That

learning curve steepens when a call is poorly crafted, some being all but impossible to play. But hold a trumpet turned and tuned by a master-say Zach Farmer or Billy Buice, Charlie Trotter or Frank Cox-and you will recognize that there is an art to the design. Every decision at the drill press and lathe affects sound so that dialing in the length, taper, and internals can take a lifetime to perfect. Maybe that more than anything is what makes Anthony Ellis so special. Simply put, the forty-one-year-old call maker from Chatsworth, Georgia, is a natural.

Ellis, who owns and operates AGE Trumpets, took two of the highest honors at the National Wild Turkey Federation's annual Grand National Callmaking Competition last year. He won first place in trumpets and the coveted Tom Turpin Award for best in class. That's a high task for anyone, but consider the fact that just five years ago Ellis had never turned a block of wood in his life.

"My buddy Simon Bishop-he's a fireman here in Murray County and makes pot calls-kept trying to get me to come to his shop because he knows how l like to tinker," Ellissays. "I finally went up there one day and made a cherry striker. A light bulb went off while I was making that striker, and I thought, I'm going to make me a trumpet. I thought, shoot, I can make one of those just to see if I can kill a turkey with it."

Ellis ordered a lathe of his own, but he was too excited to wait. Before it even arrived, he turned his first





From far left: A deer antler yelper (left) and several trumpet calls; Ellis shapes a trumpet from Georgia Osage orange wood: Ellis at his shop with the first prototype of his XT trumpet, made of lignum vitae and mammoth ivory.

trumpet on a drill press with a cheap chisel set. "Then I got my lathe and started making them nicer." he says. "At first I made five different barrels and three different mouthpieces, different sizes and different lengths on the internals. Then my uncle and I just played around with them until we figured out what played and sounded the best." Ellis turned those first few calls in 2015, and by the next year, he was already placing at the Grand Nationals. The following year he wound up taking first and second place in the amateur air-operated class.

Born and raised in Chatsworth at the foot of the Cohutta Mountains, Ellis runs a small body shop with his uncle by day that was started by his father. Now on his third lathe, he turns calls in a small garage outside his home and has a hard time keeping up with orders. As with all of the most sought-after call makers, customers can expect a waiting list, with Ellis's current production out ten to eleven months.

Most often turned from blackwood, ironwood, or Osage orange, his trumpets are sleek and beautiful, with simple lines that allow the figure of the wood to shine. But more than that, they draw easily, requiring very little air to operate, with a smooth and distinct rollover between the high and low notes of a turkey's yelp. Likewise, his barrel design makes creating and controlling back pressure—the key to creating sound with any suction call-a breeze for beginners. Ellis currently offers three trumpet models (his XT having won at the Grand Nationals), along with other calls, including a Jordan-styleyelper, a Chibouk pipe call, and a mini paddle-style box call. He recommends his T6 trumpet or the XT for beginners, noting that the longer trumpets tend to be easier to play.

Like most turkey hunters, Ellis didn't start out using trumpets, but all it took was one morning in the woods with one of his early models to steer him in the



direction he went.

"I can remember my uncle and I were over at the John's Mountain Management Area, one of the hardesthunted places around here," he says. "Usually we'll hike backa ways and try to find some birds that haven't been messed with, but since it was during the week before work, we stayed close to the truck. I remember I hit a box call, I hit a slate call-this was back when I carried tons of calls-a mouth call, and nothing was gobbling. I thought, well, shoot, I'm going to hit this trumpet. I yelped and five turkeys gobbled. Within forty-five minutes, we had a bird at thirty-five yards. That convinced me how realistic sounding they are."

Anyone who's spent time chasing them knows that public-land gobblers are the harshest critics of all. At this point, the judges have spoken. AGE Trumpets are pure turkey. G

Bourbon Country's Living History

WITH A NEW COLLECTION OF INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES, THE CITY OF LOUISVILLE TELLS ITS STORY LIKE NEVER BEFORE

t's no secret that Kentucky is home to a rich spirits history (they call it Bourbon Country for a reason, after all). And as the ultimate mecca for bourbon aficionados, Louisville offers an urban bourbon experience like nowhere else in the country. What many visitors don't know, however, is that this treasured Southern tradition contains countless hidden stories. From the first Black American to publish a cocktail book to the early Black growers and craftsmen of fine Kentucky bourbon, Louisville's new collection of Unfiltered Truth experiences paint a fuller picture of the Bourbon City's vast distilling heritage.



Outside of Kentucky, the name Tom Bullock may not ring a bell, but to Bluegrass State mixologists, his influence is invaluable. Bornin Louisville in 1872, Bullock, the son of a former slave, forged a bartending career in some of the city's most elite social clubs. Legend has it that during his tenure at the Pendennis Club, he played a key role in the creation (or at least the popularization) of one of the most iconic cocktails in history: the old-fashioned. Bullock later went on to publish *The Ideal Bartender*, a groundbreaking collection of his masterful recipes—including methods for juleps and old-fashioneds now considered classics.

This year, Tom Bullock's legacy lives on in a whole new way at the Evan Williams Bourbon Experience. Upon entering a secret speakeasy at the distillery, step back in time as you come face-to-face with an ac-

tor portraying the iconic bartender. Between stories of Bullock's life and reflections on his career, guests can taste a number of premium whiskeys and a cocktail or two from the author's repertoire.

For another take on Louisville's history, pay a visit to Locust Grove. The circa-1792 Georgian mansion, now a National Historic Landmark, played host to many giants of American history—from presidents James Monroe and Andrew Jackson to famed explorers Lewis and Clark—and was home to some of the earliest small-scale distilling in Kentucky. Part of the site's Farm Distillery Project, a new tour takes guests behind the scenes of that early bourbon production through the eyes of the enslaved individuals who made it possible. As visitors wander through the residences, outbuildings, and distilling spaces, the historic home's parallel narrative comes to life with newfound clarity.

When it comes to Louisville's bourbon history, perhaps the most thorough storytelling can be found at the Frazier History Museum. Here, a new exhibit titled From Enslaved to Empowered: Kentucky's African American Experience through Bourbon, opening in March, spans from World War II to the present day, paying homage to the essential role of African Americans in the state's spirits realm. Through images, artifacts, and other interactive elements, the carefully curated exhibition reveals the untold stories of these pivotal contributions.

In every facet of Louisville's culture, vital strands of history can be traced to its vibrant African American community. Nowhere is this more evident than in the city's bourbon heritage, and the time has never been better to experience the story in full. Whether you're a first-time visitor or forging a familiar path down the Urban Bourbon Trail®, raise a glass in celebration of the extraordinary people who laid the foundation.

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Tom Bullock's Old-Fashioned

Yield: I cocktail

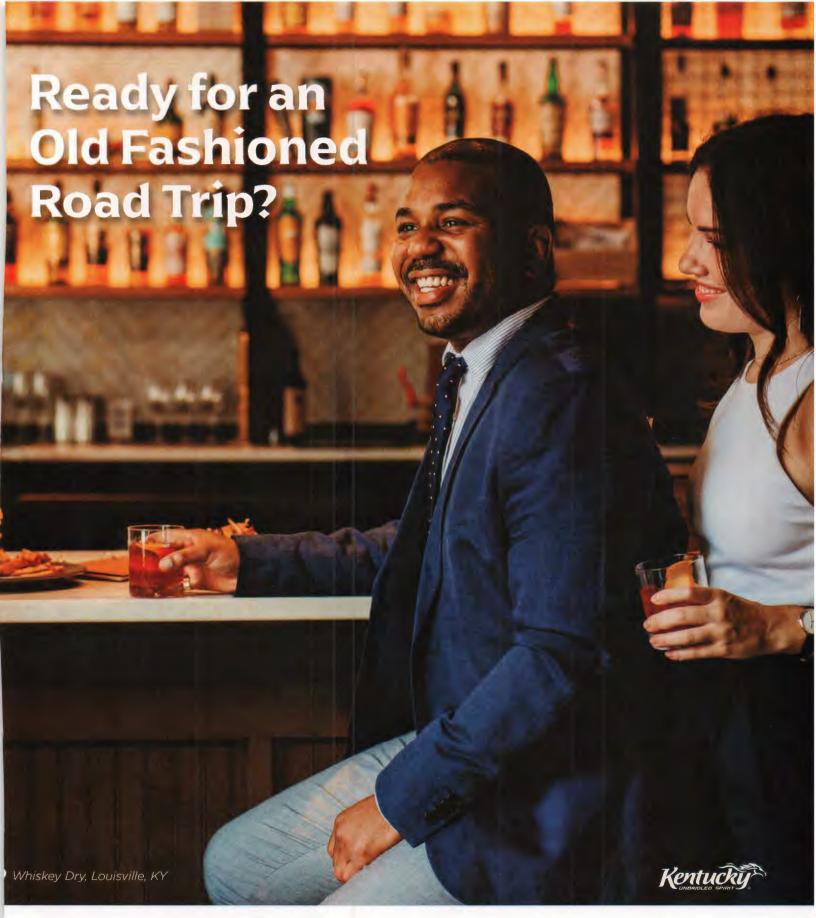
INGREDIENTS

I lump ice
2 dashes
Angostura bitters
I lump sugar
dissolved in water
1½ jiggers bourbon
Lemon peel

PREPARATION

Stir ice, bitters, sugar, and bourbon in a toddy glass. Twist lemon peel over top and drop it in before serving.

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GOOD HUNTING



Left: Jill Brown's kitchen exemplifies her design sensibility, mixing Shaker-style cabinets and hooked rugs with Belgian bluestone countertops and a Flemish antique lamp. Above: A handmade garden hat from Mexico.

> always wanted a libraryslash-dining room," says Jill Brown, who owns a housewares shop in Houston. "I always wanted to eat and entertain among books."

Perched at her ebonized mahogany Napoleon III table in a corner lined with shelves of art tomes, an Hermès scarf casually tossed around her neck and a spread of cheeses and crusty breads laid before her, Brown exudes the unmistakable air of someone who has spent a fair share of time in Europe. This three-bedroom country home northwest of the city, near the town of Bellville, looks equally civilized. Brown's little pocket of East Texas, where the coastal plains give way to gently rolling hills carved into small farms and vacation acreage, lends itself well to the finer pleasures of country life.

Brown, who grew up in rural Ohio plowing row crops and picking tomatoes, found her inner European when her now-late husband's job took them overseas for four years beginning in 1997. He worked for a Belgian company, and rather than surrounding herself with other expat spouses, she often explored the country solo. "It gave me a kind of courage and confidence," she says.

On her second day in Brussels, Brown discovered the famous flea market in the Place du Jeu de Balle—"all

HOMEPLACE

Texas Two-Step

AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN TRADITIONS HARMONIZE IN A MODERN FARMHOUSE OUTSIDE OF HOUSTON

By Tom Foster



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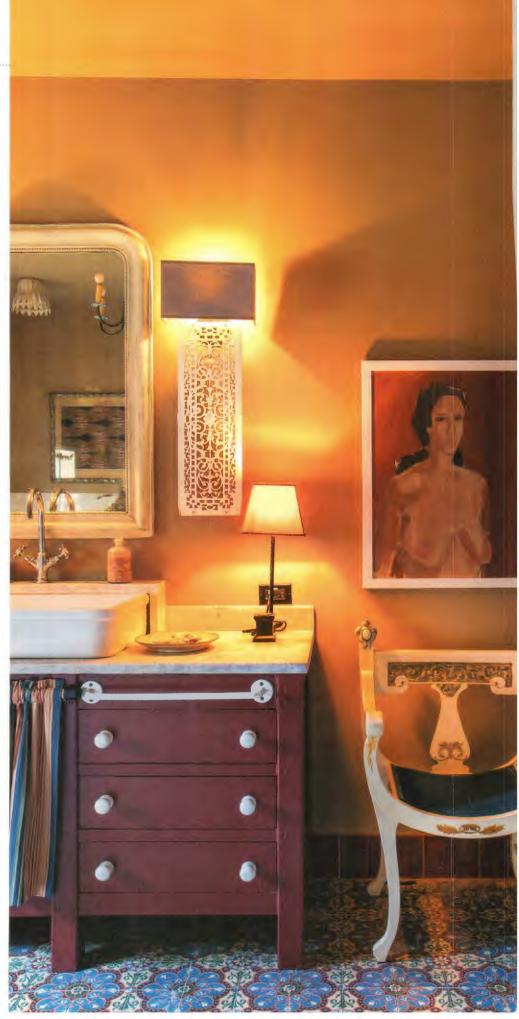


GOOD HUNTING



this stufflaid out on the ground, some junk, some not. I mean, some one found a Picasso one day. I was like, 'Oh, everything's going to be okay." She rented a little stick-shift car and started filling up their basement with treasures. As a child, she'd often gone to farm auctions with her mother, who liked antiques and classic Americana, and after college Brown had worked as a fashion and housewares buyer for Federated Department Stores. She'd always been a "thing finder," she felt, and her adventures poking around Belgium took that preoccupation to a new level. In time, she developed a signature look that married the different periods of her life-American farmhouse meets European elegance, equal parts rustic and stately.

Today that blended aesthetic runs through Brown's home. Designed in partnership with the now-late Houston architect Reagan Miller, the home evokes the Midwestern farmhouses Brown grew up around, the Belgian farmhouses she fell in love with, and a William Wurster-designed residence outside Santa Cruz, California—the Gregory Farmhouse—that is famous in part for feeling at once old and new. Miller helped Brown pull off the same trick. Her









Clockwise from top left: Brown with her roses; a Louis XVI-style twin bed in her sons' room; a portrait of her late husband's great-grandfather above an American Windsor chair; a sink crafted from an old scullery fixture in the upstairs bathroom; vintage Thonet chairs in the breakfast nook. Opposite, from left: Brown's bedroom; antique Belgian tiles in her bathroom.



Brown likes to call
the home her
"leftovers house."
Odds and ends that
never quite took off with
customers often ended up
here. "They weren't
duds to me," she says





From top: Beyond Brown's library/ dining room stand lamps made from high-voltage insulators in the entryway: the back porch.

home, built in 2013, features elements that feel fresh yet deeply rooted in place: In the concrete-floored entryway, two giant ceramic high-voltage insulators Brown found in Northern France form the bases of a pair of striking floor lamps that set an eclectic tone. Steps away, just inside the dining room/library, two floral-painted wooden chairs by the Ohio folk artist Lew Hudnall, passed down from her mother, hit a more down-home note. In the master bedroom, a set of linen crewel curtains, embroidered with flowers, appeared in Brown's life back when she and her husband lived in Michigan. A neighbor whose family had started the Packard Motor Car Company was dispensing with some historical items, and had unceremoniously put them out on the curb.

Brown likes to call the home her "leftovers house." After her husband's sudden death, in 2003, she set out in search of a passion project and decided to open a home-goods store in Houston, where the family had been living. She had a warehouse full of finds from Belgium but had not yet settled on a business model for selling them. So she bought a bungalow with a wide front porch in the centrally located Upper Kirby neighborhood and turned it into a store. Initially called Brown, the shop quickly established itself as a local institution, a place where the city's ample collector class could find one-of-a-kind pieces that made statements without being showy.

Odds and ends that didn't make it from the warehouse to the store, or never quite took off with customers, often ended up in Brown's Bellville home. "They weren't duds to me," she says. Steel factory windows from Belgium, for instance, found their way into the brick-walled wing of the house, where mismatched slabs of marble-red, gray, large, small-compose the powder-room floor.

The hallmarks of Brown's style—at her store as well as in this house-include a rich



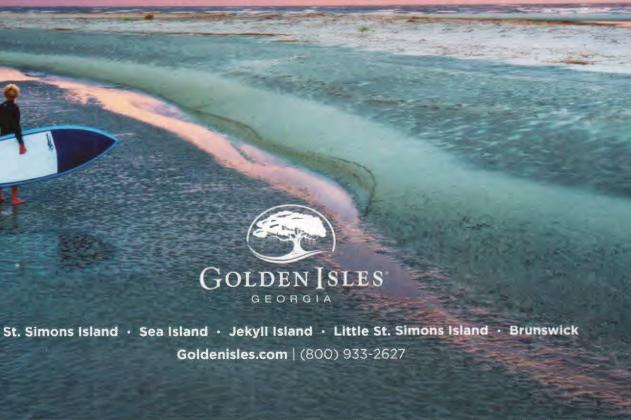


but natural-feeling palette. In the kitchen: dark greenish-blue cabinets, walls the color of butternut squash, and hooked rugs with geometric patterns in shades of red, yellow, and blue. In the master bedroom, pine floors painted deep green, walls a different shade of butternut, and bright turquoise window trim. All of which fits together in a way that may sound unconventional but couldn't look more organic-a harmony that reflects her personal history in the form of a color scheme.

After reopening her shop in October under the new name Brown House and Wares, repositioning the mix from mostly furniture and lighting to primarily gifts and housewares, Brown spends her weekdays in Houston. As she makes the hour drive most weekends out to Bellville, relief sets in. She may spend mornings riding the lawn mower or tending the rose garden, which lies behind a split-rail fence across from a broad sitting area around a firepit, and often hosts her two adult sons and their families. But quiet moments are when the house does its best work. Brown likes reading amid the honeysuckle on a bench in the woods just beyond the backyard. Or curling up at that dining table, perhaps polishing the silver-"therapeutic," she says-or living her dream of enjoying a bite among her books. G



Discover the World's best-kept secret



Endless Summer in the Golden Isles

NO MATTER THE SEASON, GEORGIA'S BARRIER ISLANDS PROMISE MILD WEATHER, LUSH ACCOMMODATIONS, AND MILES OF NATURAL WONDER

n the southern coast of Georgia, a string of barrier islands and one mainland city have captured the hearts of many a visitor. Draped in a veil of Spanish moss and skirted by shimmering marsh grass, the region known as the **Golden Isles** has a reputation for enchantment—no matter the season. While the warmer months bring long, lazy beach days and dips in the

months bring long, lazy beach days and dips in the nearest pool, sunny skies and comfortable temperatures year-round mean the spirit of summer lingers on. With highs in the mid-sixties in the "dead of winter," alfresco dining, wildlife exploration, and friendly golf tournaments are blissfully accessible, and whether you're hopping from island to island or hunkering down in your favorite spot, the Golden Isles are sure to win you over.

From Atlantic beaches to salt marshes and tidal creeks, the Golden Isles are filled with wild Southern beauty. On **St. Simons Island**, the largest of the Golden Isles, the winding, oak-lined streets are enough to make one swoon. Here, the charming villages hold plenty to see and do. To get a sense of the island, start at the Pier Village district, St. Simons's downtown hub overlooking the ocean. As a salty breeze drifts through the streets, wander through the boutiques, bakeries, and green spaces before landing at the nearby St. Simons Lighthouse Museum. Built in 1872, the iconic lighthouse looms above the island in all its glory, offering stunning views to anyone willing to climb its 129 steps.

Across the causeway, **Sea Island**'s all-encompassing resort delivers one of the barrier islands' most Iuxurious

retreats. In addition to five miles of glistening shoreline, the island lays claim to two award-winning lodging options: the Forbes Five-Star Cloister at Sea Island and the Lodge at Sea Island, a Forbes Five-Star and AAA Five-Diamond property. While thrills are in store for visitors of every taste, Sea Island is especially renowned for its impeccable golf links. At the Sea Island Golf Club, the Seaside course (host of the PGA Tour's annual RSM Classic) sprawls out against a sweeping Atlantic backdrop, while a number of other holes offer world-class design and a formidable challenge.

Beyond the greens, travelers will delight in the plethora of activities available through the resorts. Seaside horseback riding is one such favorite—riders ages three



Find Your Paradise at the King and Prince

One of the region's most iconic locales, the King and Prince Beach & Golf Resort offers luxury and adventure in equal measure Among island accommodations, one St. Simons destination reigns supreme. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the King and Prince Beach & Golf Resort sits just steps from the shore, a stylish haven for any traveler. Here, delightful amenities abound, from three swimming pools and a pristine beach to an award-winning golf course and unmatched coastal dining at ECHO, St. Simons' only ocean front restaurant and bar. kingandprince.com · 800-342-0212

and up can take in the sights from the island's breathtaking trails, snaking along the beach and through the quiet marshes. For those looking to try something new, a team of seasoned instructors is also on hand to provide lessons in sailing, fishing, tennis, and more. If soaking in some rays is what you seek, however, Sea Island Beach Club is your spot, dotted with lounge chairs for kicking back on warm, breezy days.

The southernmost of the Golden Isles, **Jekyll Island** has long been a favorite among coastal Georgia visitors. The island, just 5,700 acres, is packed with rich Southern history. Once a tried-and-true getaway for affluent American families such as the Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, and Pulitzers, the destination is home to a host of wonders including luxury accommodations, waterfront dining, and pristine hunting grounds.

At Driftwood Beach, petrified driftwood and trees are interspersed on the sand, a rare and mesmerizing scene towander through. The interactive Georgia Sea Turtle Center is also headquartered here, devoted to protecting the vulnerable creatures that visit each year to nest. A collection of architectural sights are scattered through Jekyll Island as well, from the circa-1743 Horton House to the sprawling homes that make up the island's National Historic Landmark District.

Just a short ferry ride away lies St. Simons Island's smaller counterpart, Little St. Simons. Just 11,000 acres, the privately owned island is home to quiet beaches, untouched wildlife, and a beloved six-cottage lodge. Accommodating no more than thirty-two overnight guests, the lodge and its surroundings have the feeling of a well-kept secret. Amid the lush scenery, outdoor adventures are plentiful, be it taking guided nature walks with an expert naturalist, paddling a kayak through the glassy waters, or observing the three-hundred-plus bird species that make their home within the maritime forest.

Once you're back on the mainland, don't miss a trip to the coastal city of **Brunswick**. The city's charming streets and squares still bear their original colonial names, while the shrimp boats along the wharf fuel the region's vibrant seafood scene. To try your hand at casting a net, set out with one of the countless local fishing guides, while those partial to dry land can revel in Brunswick's scenic downtown, an easily walkable village boasting beautiful green spaces and ocean views.

No matter when it falls on the calendar, a trip to the tranquil shores of the Golden Isles is bound to transport you to brighter days. To plan your own coastal escape, visit **Golden Isles.com**



The Golden Isles Essentials

Before you embark on the perfect trip, add these can't-miss experiences to your itinerary.

Explore the St. Simons Lighthouse ST. SIMONS ISLAND

This centuries-old landmark offers unparalleled views of the coast (including rare sights of Jekyll Island and Brunswick) to anyone who braves its height.

Play a round of golf

Golffanatics from all over the world travel to the Golden Isles for a chance to tee up on one of Sea Island Golf Club's three championship courses. Guests of the island have access to the links, as well as resident golf pros.

Take in the history

On idyllic Jekyll Island, the rich history dates back some 3,500 years. Explore the historic houses, landmarks, and museums for a fuller picture of the region.

Taste the bounty

On Little St. Simons, a team of chefs prepare family-style meals for lodge guests using fresh seafood and produce sourced directly from the island. Oatch a fish during your stay? A chef can cook that to your liking, too.

Climb aboard a fishing charter BRUNSWICK

The Golden Isles' surrounding waters are known for some of the best fishing in the South. Book a charter out of Brunswick to wrangle tarpon, skipjacks, shrimp, and more.



BY JILL MCCORKLE

Sibling Revelry

THE YIN AND YANG OF A PAIR OF LITTERMATES TURNS OUT TO BE JUST THE RIGHT MIX OF CRAZY A

couple of years ago, my husband and I lost two of our three dogs within months of each other and swore that we needed a lot of time to pass. Zeno, a Bulgarian shepherd, had filled the yard with his large body and deep baritone bark. He was always on patrol and threatened by nothing; snakes and possums and raccoons were all commonplace catches. If coyotes yipped, his loud response si-

lenced them. And yet, he could also catch a songbird in his big soft mouth and then gently place it down where he could study its terrified little body until one of us distracted him while the other lifted the relieved bird to a safe spot. Rufus, a red border collie and probably the most soulful and intelligent dog either of us has ever known—and we've both known quite a few—was nearly human, his eyes seeming to read our thoughts, his loyalty unflinching.

There would never be another Rufus; his loss was overwhelming. And there definitely would never be another Zeno, a guy who might have been a dangerous hit man had he not been raised by devoted, working-toplease border collies. We agreed that we could never replace them, and still, within days it seems we started talking about dogs, something that filled me with guilt. the widow with a fridge full of casseroles already logging on to Match.com. But it would be too hard to have another border collie on the heels of Rufus. And Zeno? Already critters were creeping in closer and closer to the henhouse. So what about Bernese mountain dogs-a similar size to Zeno and known to be sweet and loving? Big barks, but what they really want is to sit as close to you as possible while you drink

hot cocoa and pretend you're in the Alps.

Tom went while I was away and found Lena. He sent me a photo of the whole litter, adorable Bernese pups. Lena front and center and leaning into the camera, and then there was this little one that looked like a panda with a big white head and one blue eye. The breeders thought they had a home for him, but before leaving, Tom couldn't help but put his name on the list as backup should it fall through. Lena came home and got used to things, quickly making friends with Frankie. Frankie is a labradoodle, who is fine as long as she's in charge and no one goes near her bowl or sits in what she thinks is her chair or her bed or touches any of her toys. Lena physically outgrew her in a couple of weeks but remained submissive and still is. They were a great pair, but we kept thinking about the little odd guy with one blue eye, Luke. That was his litter name. He was Luke and Lena was Leia, though sadly the Force was not with him; he seemed more Chewie-a different species from a peaceful planet.

It wasn't long before we got the backup call. Tom went and got Luke and we changed his name to Blue, and if there was ever a dog deserving of that wellused name, it was this guy. His sad droopy Saint Bernard eyes require drops, and on top of that he is completely deaf. He was born without good muscle control-what is often called a swimmer pup-and his legs would slide out from his body, leaving him sprawled like a little bear rug and then struggling to get back up. He was a big clumsy ball of white fur, enormous slue-footed front paws, and tightly bound back legs that didn't bend. We regularly



WHEN THEY WERE SPAYED AND NEUTERED, I SPLURGED AND BOUGHT THE COMFY BLOW-UP CONES ONLY TO HAVE HIM POP HERS AND HER POP HIS WITHIN THE FIRST TEN MINUTES. THEN IT WAS BACK TO THE OLD HEAVY PLASTIC KILL-YOUR-SHINS-AND-BREAK-LAMPS CONES, AND THOUGH IT TOOK THEM LONGER TO SPRING EACH OTHER, THEY COULD DO IT



bicycled his floppy limbs while Lena and Frankie zoomed and ran circles all around him. Frankie seemed to know instinctively to go easy on him, sometimes looking at me as if to ask: What's going on with him? If he ever felt left out or shunned, it didn't show. He outgrew everyone quickly and developed his own gait—a full-fledged giant bunny hop that these days is very fast. We tend to think that he might not exist as he currently does without the care and attention of his sister. She runs and wakes him when something exciting is going on; they eat side by side, sleep head to head.

When they were spayed and neutered, I splurged and bought the comfy blow-up cones only to have him pop hers and her pophis within the first ten minutes. Then it was back to the old heavy plastic kill-yourshins-and-break-lamps cones, and though it took them longer to spring each other, they could do it. We went through seven cones, nine if you count the inflatable ones.

Though I have not witnessed these two all through the night, I can only imagine they have their own routines. Blue often goes to bed filthy-his big white face covered in dirt, head haloed in a cloud of dust like Pigpen from Peanuts—only to greet us in the morning with a clean face and a big happy smile. It's as if he gets sent out to the dry cleaner every night, but we suspect it is the work of his sister to groom him before bed. In exchange, he follows and does whatever she does all day long.

Their devotion to each other is sweet, but having both can also be a challenge. They love to lean in close, sometimes as if they can't get close enough. When they double up for a lean, that's 220 pounds, which if you're not expecting it is certainly enough to knock you over, which they think is a game. My experience is that once down, it might take a little time to get back up, and most definitely clothes need to be changed. I have now read many articles about Littermate Syndrome and the overattachment the dogs often have, everything done in stereo. Lena and Blue are a textbook case.

Lena's athletic body allows her to run and do things Blue can't always achieve though he happily hops right along behind her as long as he can. If they were human, we might say that she has outgrown him and needs some relief from her responsibilities. Lately, Tom has started taking her on little field trips. She loves to ride in his truck, and though Blue wanted to go the first time, he now seems content to watch her leave and spends the time dozing near the driveway while he waits for her return. Then, on her arrival, they joyfully greet each other as if it's been days. Her daily outings are the equivalent of the teenage daughter getting her own phone and being connected to a life beyond the mother ship. And though people meeting him for the first time think he's elderly-more Obi-Wan Kenobi than Luke—he definitely functions as the devoted younger sibling. While she's off running and sightseeing, he is chasing the falling leaves, hopping and biting at imaginary flies, and rubbing against our legs with the hope we might lift him up for a hug. Being hugged is his favoritething of all.

Our getting them might have been a little impulsive. And now we know that many would have warned us against getting littermates. But we've decided their joyful affection is worth it. It's double the pounds, double the work, the food, the barks, and the enormous paw prints, but we're glad we did it. And when they come barreling up to greet us-all 220 pounds-the Force is definitely with us all. G

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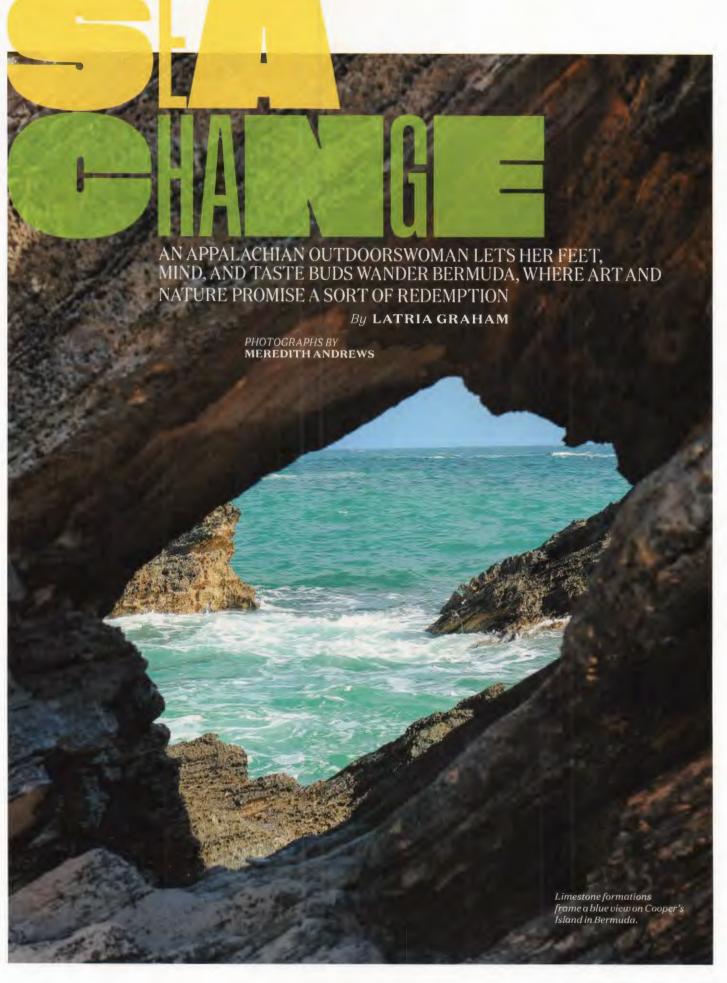


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OF BERMUNA

S ASLEEP, but we are up with the birds and the stars. My guide, Weldon Wade, and I have trekked to the island's largest wildlife sanctuary to watch the sun rise over Spittal Pond along the Atlantic Ocean. As we fumble our way toward the water, we find ourselves caught in that stretch of darkness before dawn: The sky has yet to lighten to lavender, which means we can only hear the high-pitched calls of the killdeer, not see the birds themselves. It will be an hour, maybe more, before the sun reveals their hiding places, so I focus on the staccato clicking coming from a ruddy turnstone as I try to find my footing.

Wade is a Bermudan diver and the founder of the conservation organization Guardians of the Reef. When he isn't free diving to hunt invasive lionfish or leading cleanups to remove litter from the ocean, he can be found in preserves like this one-spots that make Bermuda a bird-watcher's paradise. White-eyed vireos, starlings, and sparrows all nest here, and rarer species like white-tailed tropic birds, known locally as longtails, stop through annually and help mark the change in seasons.

The chatter coming from whimbrels sounds like something between a whine and a whistle, as if they feel just as skeptical about being awake as I do. We hear curlew-curlee coming from a thicket of buttonwood and bay grape trees, its speaker unfamiliar. I brace for the onslaught of mosquitoes that always materialize to feast upon me. They never come. They won't, Wade explains. Spittal Pond is brackish. No standing fresh water, no mosquitoes. This truly is paradise. By the time we make it to the seaside's edge, the sky is the color of a ripe plum, but soon all will go lilac, heralding light.

> FLEW FROM ATLANTA TO BERMUDA two days before. I am afraid of flying and always have been. Usually, I would take something to sleep away my anxiety, but boarding the plane

was the closest I'd felt to freedom in some months and I made myself stay awake, saying hello to the wider world from my airplane window. For just a few minutes, the sea and the sky are the same color—one punctuated by coral, the other dotted with clouds, and I exist in this liminal space. I understand what I have left behind but do not know much about what I am moving toward.

The word island might take you far away, to a land of shipwrecks, pirates, and treasure. Or perhaps to endless beaches, spectacular sunsets, and unlimited cocktails served in coconuts. The truth about

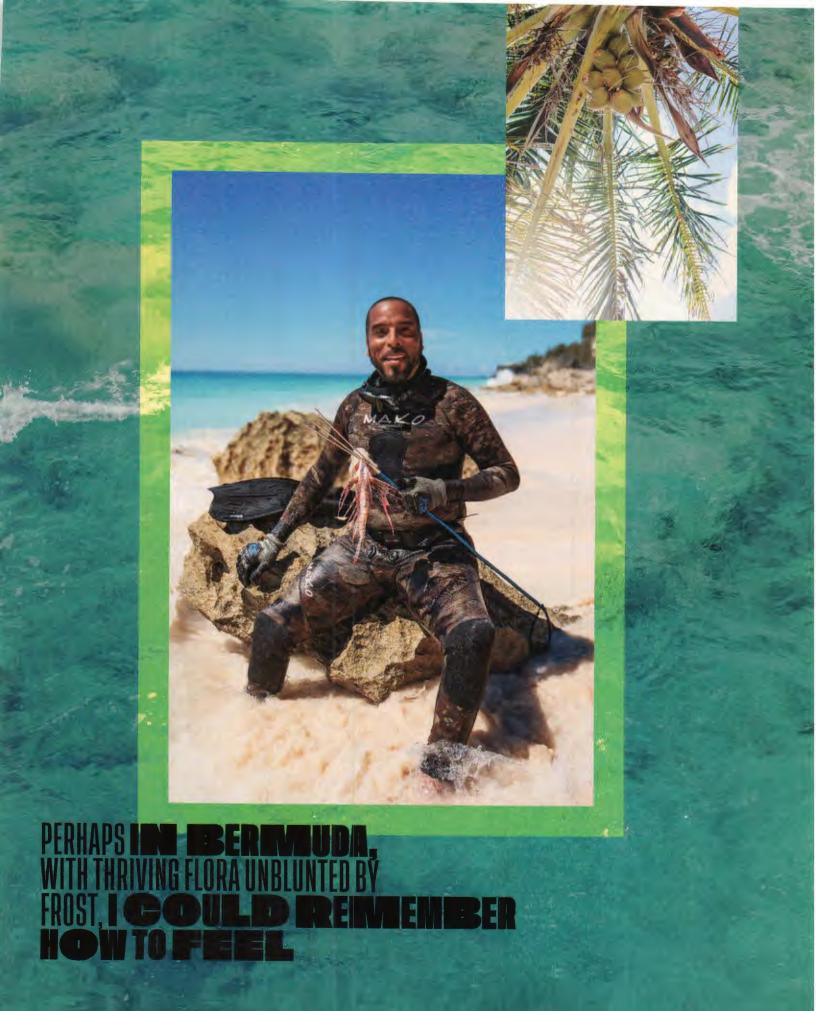


Bermuda lies somewhere in between. A British territory, but bevond the occasional formality, not British really. Colorful like the Caribbean, but too far north to count. The closest landmass is North Carolina, less than seven hundred miles west. Not far from the American South, but still, not Southern.

Spanish mariner Juan de Bermúdez first documented the archipelago in the early 1500s, and Bermuda long served as a stopover where shipwrecked crews made repairs and for aged for food. Sailors called it the Devil's Isle for its treacherous reefs and because of the sounds created by nocturnal cahow birds and wild hogs chortling from the shore. Five hundred years later, the place that once inhabited early explorers' nightmares is now atwenty-first-century visitor's davdream.

I thought about all of this as I watched the color of the sea shift from sapphire to azure. I felt far away from the Appalachian foothills where I am from, where the hard freezes had started and there was nothing left to bloom. In 2020, I lost my grandmother and said a heartrending farewell to my family's farm when it sold at auction. With the stroke of a pen, I had lost my connection to my homeplace, to the hundreds of flowers my grandmother tended for decades and the magnificent view of the stars from my father's porch. In a year full of restrictions and modifications, my relationship to the things that routinely buoyed me felt severed too. The tragedies I felt most keenly were my own, but the world's losses, upended traditions, and stresses compounded them. As the year clipped to a close, I realized I was numb.

> Above: A traditional Bermudan roofline. Opposite, from top: Coconuts at Cooper's Island; diver Weldon Wade on the beach at Southlands.



Perhaps in Bermuda, with the thriving viridescent flora of the subtropics unblunted by frost, and its pink sand beaches, sherbet-colored homes, and fourteen endemic plant species to awaken my curiosity, I could remember how to feel. Pandemic protocols make the island a relatively safe choice, and after taking the required COVID test prior to departure, and another one upon arrival, I was desperate to put my body in the Atlantic and talk to it, praying it could carry my worries away on its waves. I had six days here to search for myself and fortify her, before boarding a plane back to what was sure to be a long dark winter. To find some wonder again. And so I promised myself I would wander, that I would seek out what most fuels my soul: nature and art.

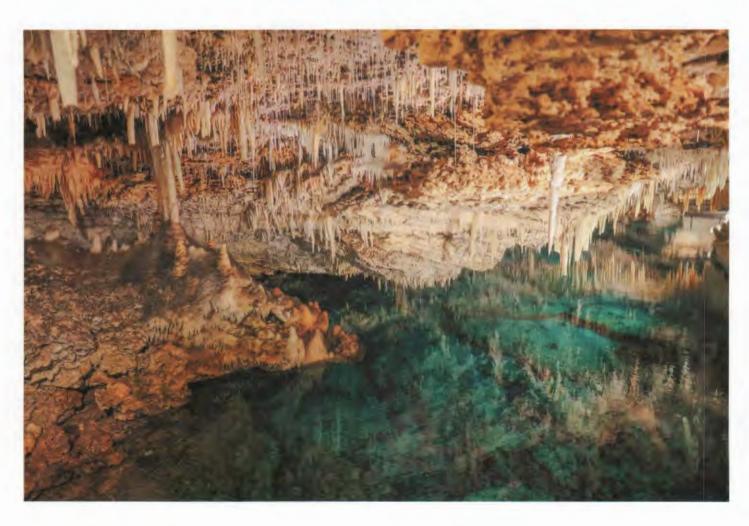
HE LATTER IS EVERYWHERE, JUST ONE OF THE WAYS the isle stuns me. The street art in the capital city of Hamilton, with a mural on seemingly every block, rivals that of cities like Austin and Nashville. The hotel for the first half of my stay, Hamilton Princess & Beach Club, doubles as an art museum with some three hundred pieces among its holdings. Jeff Koons, Takashi Murakami, and Andy Warhol works dot the hallways and accent the lobby. My room's balcony, looking out to Hamilton Harbour, also has a view of Yayoi Kusama's Pumpkin in the open-air courtyard. Kusama's work speaks to

me, and every year I make a point to see one of her exhibitions, sometimes

waiting hours in the cold. Staring at her bronze sculpture, I realize I haven't been to a museum



I WAS DESPERATE TO PUT MY BODY IN THE ATLANTIC AN



all year. This is the most art I've seen in months. I smile.

The island has long been a haven for artists. Georgia O'Keeffe came here in the 1930s to treat her depression, and some of her pieces hang in the Masterworks Museum of Bermuda Art. Tucked away inside Bermuda's botanical garden, the space houses more than 1,500 works. A sculpture paying homage to John Lennon, another island visitor, stands in front of the building.

After exploring the art museum, I meander through the garden on market day and delight in the island's produce, a great point of pride. Bermuda's bananas are tiny compared with the Cavendish cultivar in stores back home. Tasting a Bermuda banana, I have the revelation that my revulsion for bananas probably comes from my taste buds recognizing underripe ones. These are ready to eat. and the rest of my fruit disappears from my bag as I walk around the garden's grounds, documenting every color hibiscus I come across-opal, cerise, and a new-to-me two-toned variety with golden petals and a vermilion center.

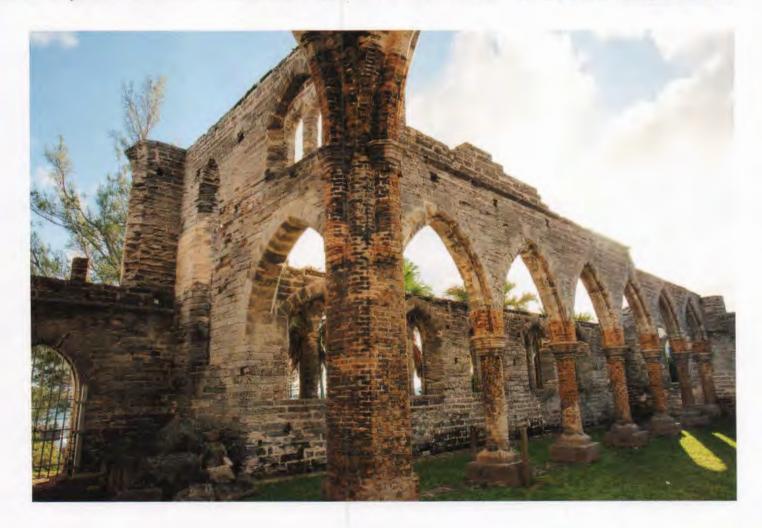
VERY PLACE I GO OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS, I LEARN AND UNlearn. When people think of this island, they might envision sailing and Bermuda shorts, but centuries of history have happened here. Kristin White, one of Bermuda's cultural ambassadors, offers walking and cycling tours through her bookshop, Long Story Short, and her route through the town of St. George's highlights

several of the island's Black changemakers and survivors. Mary Prince, for instance, whose autobiography about the cruelties of slavery galvanized the country's abolitionist movement. Her ability to recount the painful parts of her past changed the course of the island. In Hamilton sits a statue of another enslaved woman, Sally Bassett, who was burned alive for poisoning her owners. Folklore says that Bermudiana, the country's national flower, grew among her ashes. The plant still blooms here, the flower's distinctive purple petals and bright yellow center never allowing people to forget. I marvel at the way Bermudans have turned a story about another's suffering into something they could understand, and along the way have found something enduring in it.

There are smaller revelations and simple pleasures,

The ruins of an unfinished 1800s stone church in St. George's. Opposite, from top: Travel guide Shuntelle Paynter at Penno's Wharf in St. George's; stalactites at Crystal Cave.

ALK TO IT, PRAYING IT COULD CARRY MY WORRIES AWAY **ON ITS WAVIES**





too: the scent and sound of allspice leaves as they click together during a westerly breeze; how my aversion to lobster melts away when I eat one in season, paired with the small but sweet Bermudan peaches at Huckleberry Restaurant. In Fort Hamilton's fern garden, I wanderdown hidden passages, vacillating between green and more green, and leave exuberant, the smell of chlorophyll still clinging to my skirt. One night at the glamorous Rosewood resort at Tucker's Point, I have the pool to myself for a starlit swim. I pick out the constellations Draco and Cepheus and think of all the time I've spent looking up at the sky since I was a child, hoping to understand my place in the universe.

My it inerary is filled with these kinds of quiet moments of beauty. But adventure calls. too.

"I don't think I can do this," I utter through clenched teeth, my hands gripping the handlebars of a cherry-red cruiser. I am in St. George's with Shuntelle Paynter of the tour company A Journey to Telle, heading off on a two-hour e-bike excursion to explore the caves in Walsingham Nature Reserve, known to locals as Tom Moore's Jungle.

I am a competent cyclist, but only barely, and dark wild spaces make me claustrophobic. Still, I strap on my helmet, say the Lord's Prayer (I am sure God was as shocked to hear from me as I was to be calling on him), and push off. As we dodge vehicular traffic, my knuckles turn the color of a Bermudan roof. But I try to take in the landscape, too—I'll never get this perspective from the back of a taxi, one of the primary modes of transportation here, since visitors aren't allowed to rent cars.

When we arrive at the reserve, I feel almost giddy, relieved I didn't wind up as someone's hood ornament and intoxicated by the scene before me. In the bay, parrotfish, with their Day-Glolips, wind their way through seagrass beds in search of algae. We leave our things at the entrance and hike into the forest to a cave wide enough to fit inside. I descend into this subterranean world, inching forward until my eyes adjust to the darkness, heartbeat pounding in my ears. A crystal-clear lake surrounds me on three sides. Thick winter-white stalactites, millions of years in the making, hang from the ceiling, defying gravity.

On the way back to our bikes, I spot a single flower in the grass: a golden-yellow rain lily. I have only seen this plant once before: White ones grewin my grandmother's front yard. The last time I saw my homeplace before it became somebody else's, I

plucked one, pressing the bloom between two pages of a book. I do not dare pick this canary-colored one, knowing it would not survive the bicycle ride back, or the rest of my adventures. I take a picture to remember the moment, the sign.

Yellow is the color of sunshine and all the good things associated with it: warmth, optimism, creativity. Yellow, to me, represents self-confidence and by extension happiness. As we cycle back across the causeway, I ask myself, *Am I happy*? I think about the smile I can't seem to get rid of, the ruddiness in my cheeks, my audacity in the cave.

Maybe, just for now, lam.

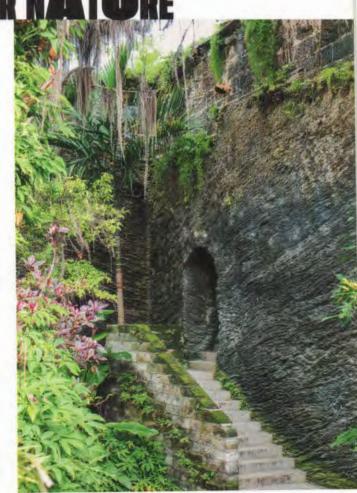


ON THE FIFTH DAY, I MEET DOREEN WILLIAMS-JAMES out on Cooper's Island, a decommissioned military base, to take part in her Wild Herbs N Plants tour. For years she's led treks out into the lesser reaches of the islands to talk about the edible plants that grow there. She teaches me how she lives off the land, making baked goods, salads, soups, and teas from things she forages.

"The island can provide everything you need to survive," she tells me in a gentle, lilting voice. "When we think of hurricanes, we think of destruction, but the plants—they come back. Mother Nature will take care of us." She indicates where the wild oranges will be when the time is right, and what to look for during loquat season. She picks up some sea purslane and hands a piece to me. I put the aqua pearl in my mouth, and when it pops, there's the sensation of eating a salty cucumber.

THE ISLAND CAN PROVIDE EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO SURVIVE.

WILL TAKE CARE OF US"





I snack and learn-peppery nasturtiums, jewel-colored prickly pear fruit, and mild-flavored aloe, which Williams-James uses in drinks. She teaches me about a plant called leaf of life, meant to help with respiratory ailments. She points out wild fennel sprigs as we walk past and talks about the Natal plums and Surinam cherries she turns into jellies.

She stoops down close to the ground and plucks furry light-green leaves off a shrub. "This is one of my favorite plants," she says as she massages them in her palm, releasing a celery-meets-citrus fragrance. "Cubanthyme." It's invasive, she explains. If you plant it, it'll take over, creeping like kudzu, swallowing anything in its path.



THE SPANISH EXPLORERS AND BRITISH colonizers who staked their claims on Bermuda could have done the same thing, turning the island into an extension of their mainland identities. Instead of one culture

dominating, all of the island's inhabitants and influences come together in the crucible of time, creating something special. Many of the island's signature things formed this way-stripping an idea down to its efficiencies, adding a little of this, a little of that, and a dash of resourcefulness. Everything from the Bermuda sloop to the

rum swizzle stems from the same confluence and ingenuity. "Bermudan cuisine is defined by this sweet and salty pairing," Weldon Wade, the diver, tells me one day as we stop into the little Mama Angie's Coffee Shop for a sandwich of deep-fried silk snapper, lettuce, tomato, tartar sauce, sautéed Bermuda onions, cheese, hot sauce, and coles law piled on raisin bread. But perhaps an unexpected harmony extends to more than just the food here.

I take my sandwich to Southlands beach, to an isolated cove where I am the only visitor. I washit down with a ginger beer. Southlands, a once-grand thirty-seven-acre estate, is now a national park. Banyan trees and Spanish bayonet plants with big bright white flowers cover the entrance and signal the beginning of something magnificent. Just steps away from the main road, the sound of traffic falls silent, these big old-growth trees serving as a sound barrier.

No true wilderness remains in Bermuda, but there are places that have a certain wildness to them, and Southlands is like that—the forest is retaking what once belonged to it. Bermuda olivewood and palmetto trees fill in any available space, stretching to sunlight, their foliage covering everything in a sheen of bay-grape green. Moss makes its home between the sections of mortar holding the stones together. Ferns find a way to root into the eroding limestone, decorating walls with lush frills. Great kiskadees call from high up in the casuarina and cedar trees. reminding listeners how they got their name: Kiss-ka-dee! When they finally take flight, the birds burst in yellow streaks through the cloudless afternoon.

It will not take much longer for this verdant landscape, the closest I've been to something like a jungle, to feel like the ruins of a lost civilization. I allow myself to wander, photographing everything, chasing the footpaths wherever they lead, not worried about being late for the next excursion, or anxious about anything at all. For a little while I just follow my curiosity. It is a safe adventure. There are no venomous snakes on Bermuda, no scorpions. On an island that's about twenty miles long and two miles wide, there is no true way to get lost. All paths lead to the sea.

> From left: The shoreline at Daniel's Head; coral reefs on the way to Cooper's Island: palm trees at Spittal Pond.





UNDAYS ARE SACRED IN BERMUDA, JUST AS they are in the South, and on my final day I make my way back to the water for one last sunrise. The sky is a dusky rose at first, and then rose gold. On this shore the sand is powdery and white. The kiskadees sing out again, perching in Brazilian pepper trees. The

trilling of the short-billed dowitcher and calls of sandpipers and plovers create today's harmony.

Out in the bay, I examine the reef; brain coral, fire coral, ambercolored sea rods—a veritable rainbow encased in cobalt below me. The islands of Bermuda sit on the lip of a long-extinct volcano. That

is where these boiler reefs come from-the remnants of a once-powerful formation now silenced by the ocean. The reefs that caused so many problems for sailors, the markers in the sea I could spot from my plane, have become a sanctuary for me.

After almost a week here, my skin has taken on a honey-colored hue and I smile a bit easier, a smidge wider, a little longer. I thought I was coming to this island in the middle of the Atlantic to return to a state of wholeness. But I am not the same person I was before the hardships, before grief made its home in my rib cage, threatening to suffocate me. Still, I am also not the woman who arrived in Bermuda, washed up, worn out. The tension I carried is mostly gone. This place is what I know now, and what awaits me back home the question. I have not stopped looking for my grandmother everywhere. But now I think, maybe, she hears me.

I talk to the Atlantic as if it were a person, telling her all of this.

I keep thinking about something Doreen Williams-James said about Mother

Nature giving us what we need to survive, about destruction and hardscrabble beginnings becoming something beautiful. I think about Bermudiana blooming from the ashes. Maybe, even with the mended places and the rough edges, I could still be radiant. I still knew the stories of the stars and where to find them. My love for art endured, it just needed stirring. My passion for flowers too. Maybe remembering these things will allow me to bring a bit of Bermuda back to Appalachia with me.

Idip my feet into the blue one final time—my hands too, palms up, as if in prayer. I take in one last taste of the sea and breathe, deeply.

Thank you, I say out loud to the Atlantic, and then I leave the beach. G



1. Southlands 2. Hamilton 3. Botanical Gardens 4. Spittal Pond 5. Tom Moore's Jungle 6. St. George's 7. Cooper's Island

PUSHIR PAR

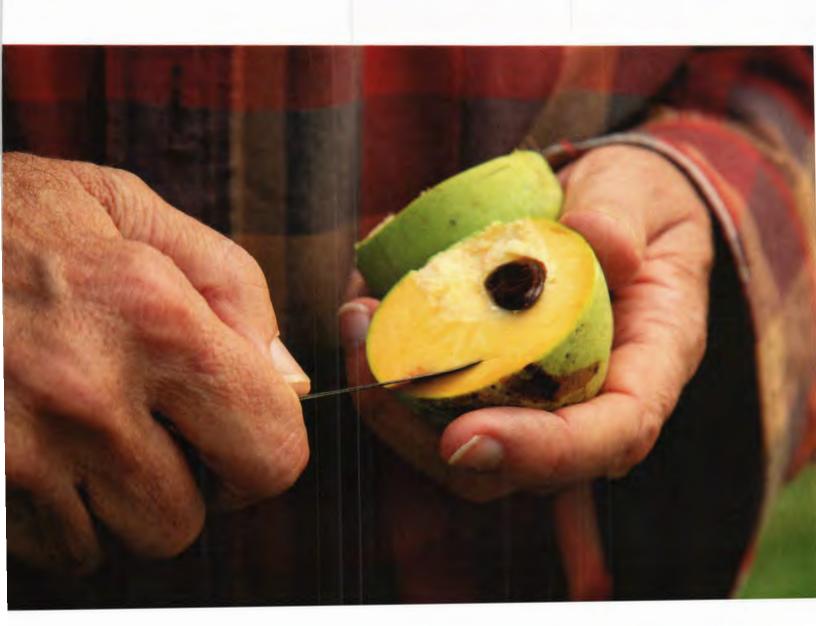
A breeding orchard of pawpaw trees. Opposite: Slicing into the fruit's golden flesh.

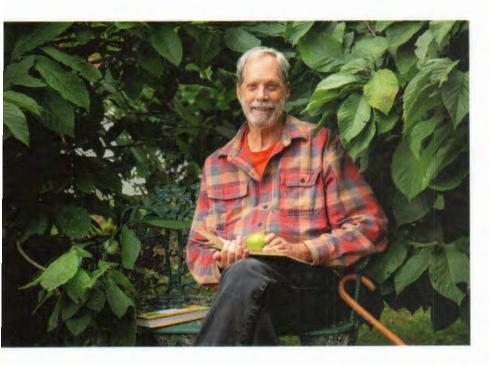




LARGELY THE DOMAIN OF FORAGERS, THE BIGGEST EDIBLE FRUIT IN THE SOUTH HAS MOSTLY BEEN FORGOTTEN. A QUIETLY OBSESSED QUAKER FROM WEST VIRGINIA HAS MADE IT HIS LIFE'S MISSION TO CHANGE THAT

BY BILL HEAVEY
PHOTOGRAPHS BY HELEN NORMAN





WENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, I WAS WALKING THE WOODS ALONG the Potomac not two miles from the White House with my foraging mentor, a cranky, gravel-voiced woman named Paula Smith. "It's a weird tree, okay?" she called over her shoulder as we walked into the gloom of the woods. "The flowers are sorta liver colored and don't smell too good. That's 'cause they get pollinated by scavenger insects, blowflies and beetles. You really want to help them out, you hang some roadkill in the tree."

I was suddenly less interested in finding and eating the largest edible fruit in North America, but I didn't want to tell her that. We soon found a cluster of the spindly brown trees, but none that had fruit. "A lot of 'em don't produce." she said. "They need the right amount of water at the right time." The next cluster-each stand of trees is often a single organism, she explained-had bunches of green fruit the size of baked potatoes. Smith told me to shake the tree. "But gently," she barked. "Not like the friggin' yuppies who come out here and break the trees." I shook and two pawpaws thudded down, one glancing off the side of my head. I looked at her accusingly. "Oh yeah, that happens," she said nonchalantly. "Wear a hat. And look up when you shake."

The ripe pawpaw was firm but yielding, like an avocado. I cut it open, sucked the flesh from the peel, and spat out the big, flat seeds. The flesh was yellow orange with a luscious texture, almost like a custard. But it was the tasteluxurious, sweet, with a long finish—that threw me. It tasted tropical, the fruit of a tree rooted in Costa Rica with three-thousand-mile-long branches. The flavor was not unlike a banana. It also had hints of mango and papaya, even pineapple. But none of the "tastes like" descriptors do it justice. A pawpaw tastes like a pawpaw. There's nothing else like it.

Pawpaws are having something of a moment these days. Throughout the fruit's native range-it grows wild in twenty-six states, including most of the South and as far north as Michigan—craft brewers are making pawpaw beer and ale. You can find pawpaw ice cream in high-end restaurants. Facebook groups like Pawpaw Fanatics count several thousand followers posting trophy photos of their finds. Lori Mackintosh, who runs a you-pick fruit and vegetable farm in Berryville, Virginia, that supplies pawpaws, says she can spot people who want them as soon as they get out of their cars. When I ask how, she says, "Well, dreadlocks and BO," then laughs at her own description.

But to understand the moment, you need to know that pawpaws were much better known in centuries past than they are today. The Indians had been happily eating them for millennia before European settlers arrived. According to some reports, George Washington's favorite dessert was chilled pawpaws. Thomas Jefferson planted pawpaw trees at Monticello and sent seeds to friends in Europe. Pawpaws sustained Lewis and Clark when their rations ran low on their journey to the unexplored West. They were commonly consumed back when we were a rural people. West Virginia, Michigan, and Illinois all have towns or villages named after the pawpaw. It's the state fruit of Ohio.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw flurries of interest, including an exhaustive 1905 treatise with the fetching title The Pawpaw: A Native Fruit of Great Excellence. But the big event in the pawpaw timeline came in 1916, when the American Genetic Association offered fifty-dollar cash prizes for the largest individual tree and for the tree bearing the best fruit. The contest attracted fruit from seventyfive trees across the country. The best-fruit winner belonged to a Mrs. Frank Ketter, of Ironton, Ohio. "The flesh is medium yellow in color, mild but very rich in flavor, neither insipid nor cloying," the judges wrote. "The amount and quality of the flesh, together with the good shipping and ripening qualities of the fruit, make this an extremely desirable variety."

So what happened? Andrew Moore in his book Pawpaw: In Search of America's Forgotten Fruit succinctly sums it up: "On the heels of this contest came no radical change in the pawpaw's standing. Nothing much happened at all."

But it was also as if the fruit were intentionally difficult, even defiant. Pawpaws bruise easily. Compared with other fruits, they don't ship well. They have a capriciously short ripeness season-usually a few weeks in September, possibly a few days in late August or early October. Pick one before it's ripe and it goes from solid to mush (although you can keep an almost-ripe one in the fridge for three weeks). The pulp does freeze well, and pawpaw ice cream and milkshakes are amazing, but serious aficionados caution you not to cook with them. Under heat, pawpaws lose their vivid zing and taste ordinary, sort of like bananas. In which case you might as well use bananas in the first place.

F PAWPAWS EVER DO BECOME WIDELY KNOWN and accepted, it will be thanks to a mild but obsessed man named Neal Peterson, who has been called the Johnny Appleseed of pawpaws, or Papa Pawpaw. Peterson, a Quaker with a sly sense of humor and an admiration for Gandhi, prefers the Mahatma of Pawpaws. The single bumper sticker on the back of his Prius reads, HOW DOES YOUR LIFE REMOVE THE CAUSES OF WAR?

When I pull up to his house in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, population about 280, I notice two lawn deer arranged in the grass out front. They come to life and bound away as I approach. As I look around the modest house with a long front porch where Peterson keeps



tools, pots of flowers, and a plastic tray of pawpaw seedlings, the seventy-twoyear-old tells me he rented it furnished. Not even the rugs or artwork are his. But the photos, I say, gesturing to the framed images of family. "They came with the place, too," he says. "I guess I didn't see any reason to take them down." He sounds either mildly apologetic or mildly disturbed at the notion that what's on his walls makes any difference. This, I decide, is a man who treads lightly upon the earth, who lives in his head. And what his head is full of is pawpaws.

An unassuming zealot and a pioneer, Peterson has quietly trademarked seven varieties of pawpaws and dedicated his life to popularizing the forgotten fruit. He just happens to have a couple of his varieties on hand for me to try. One is Shenandoah. It has a custardy texture and a sweet and mellow taste. Wild pawpaws sometimes have a bitter note at the end of the long finish. Not this one. The other is Susquehanna, his personal favorite. It's a big pawpaw, sweeter and richer, with a buttery texture. Both are exceptional, at least as good as the best wild fruit I've ever had. Over the years, Peterson has tasted so many pawpaws that his throat gets irritated when he eats one of inferior quality. In between samples, he cleanses his palate with water and a cracker, just like a wine taster.

Nearly all of the places Peterson has lived in his life have been rentals. The

the university's arboretum. "At the time, I didn't think it was professional for me to be eating a wild fruit off the ground in front of students," he says. But later he returned and tried one. "The light bulb turned on. It was an epiphany, a revelation. I couldn't believe that there was a wild fruit that tasted this good."

He knew from his studies that nearly all the cultivated fruits we eat have benefited from thousands of years of selective breeding. Apples and peaches are thought to have been domesticated more than 4.000 years ago. Oranges are a roughly 3.000-year-old hybrid of the mandarin and the pomelo. What, he wondered, might the pawpaw be now had it been subjected to similar selective breeding? If pawpaws had existed in Mesopotamia a few thousand years ago, he says, they'd be in American supermarkets today. "Look, I wasn't a plant breeder or grower by any means," he tells me. "But I said to myself, 'I'm capable of doing







 $From {\it left:} Peterson {\it and research} {\it assistant} {\it Rodney Dever evaluate fruit;} the {\it grafting process;} fresh {\it pawpaw seeds.}$

exception was a fifty-three-acre farm he cashed out his retirement savings and everything else to buy in 2000 in Pendleton County, West Virginia. In May of that year, he hired high school students to help him plant 3,000 grafted pawpaw trees. The night of May 5 it rained, which he took as a harbinger of a good harvest. It didn't rain again until mid-August, the worst drought since 1930. He lost 2,950 trees, and the 50 that survived were too stressed to make it through the winter. "It was pawpaws or bust," he tells me over lunch at the Mountain View Diner in Charles Town. "And I went bust." He seems detached from the disaster, as if it were just a temporary setback. Which, in the long trajectory of his life as a plant breeder, it was.

ETERSON GREW UP IN SAINT ALBANS, WEST VIRGINIA, THE middle child of three. The son of a schoolteacher and her research chemist husband, he was aware of pawpaws growing up but never thought the fruit was good for much besides throwing at other kids. But he loved the woods. It was a place to get away, a place he felt like himself.

The moment that set the course of his life came in 1975, when he was a graduate student and teaching assistant studying plant genetics at West Virginia University. On a hike with students one day, he smelled ripe pawpaw fruit in this. Nobody else is doing this. And it's crying out to be done." And so he took on the task of domesticating the wild pawpaw.

One of the big problems was time. A pawpaw tree requires seven or eight years before it produces fruit, and you need fruit from three different years to do a proper evaluation. Trees are complicated, he tells me. They vary from year to year, as does the fruit. Even fruit from different branches of the same tree may taste different. It takes a decade to see scientific results. And that's just one generation. No industrial producer wants to spend that kind of time and money on an unproven fruit. That takes a visionary. Or a fanatic.

Reasoning that the lost cultivars from the 1916 contest contained the best genetic material, he set out to find them. He waded through old records in courthouses and churches. He logged countless miles on back roads, trying to locate farms where the owners had grown and experimented with pawpaws. Many old

farms had been turned into corn and soybean fields. Some were housing developments.

In 1980, five years after the light bulb went on. Peterson visited the Blandy Experimental Farm in Boyce, Virginia. He had reason to believe that a collection of seeds including descendants of the prize-winning Ketterfruit had once been grown there. The staff at Blandy seemed to have no interest in pawpaws, but someone remembered that there had once been some trees in what was now the backwoods. He was welcome to walk there if he wanted. The tall oaks and hickories were anything but good pawpaw habitat, but a fair way in, Peterson took a step and spotted a cluster of pawpaw trees. A few more steps and the cluster resolved itself into a straight line, evidence of cultivation. Several yards farther, he found another row. That September. he came back to sample the fruit. It was exceptionallarge, round, and sweet, with a high ratio of flesh to

By 1996, Peterson had ruthlessly selected the eighteen best varieties from his fifteen hundred trees, and despite losing three thousand trees at his shortlived Pendleton County farm, he kept at it. By 2004, he was in the process of trademarking six varieties and was marketing them through his business, Peterson Pawpaws. His most recent variety is a pawpaw he calls Tallahatchie. Many people name their fruit varieties after themselves, but that wasn't how he rolled. "I was taught that your life ought to contribute something to others," he says. "Pawpaws are important. I'm not." He settled on rivers, along which the fruit naturally grows. And he selected rivers with Indian names, since Native Americans were the original pawpaw enthusiasts—Potomac, Shenandoah, Susquehanna, Rappahannock, Wabash, Allegheny.

For a couple of years, Peterson sold fruit and trees directly, but he quickly found himself with a two-year waiting list. "I realized that this was no way to run a business," he says. Instead, he now licenses his trees to nurseries-fifteen of them in North America, and nine overseas, including in Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Japan. "A plant breeder's work is never done," he says with a smile. His latest project is breeding pawpaw as an ornamental. "It's a beautiful tree-those big glossy leaves-and very hardy."







From left: Dever harvests a pawpaw; an array of pawpaws in various shapes; the green fruit hidden among the branches,

seeds. It was just what he'd been looking for.

Peterson took a job with the USDA in D.C. as an agricultural economist and plotted his next move. "For a breeding project, ten thousand trees would have been ideal," he says. "But for that you need a staff, and I didn't have one." Instead he had friends, as well as a knack for "Tom Sawyering" them (his term) into helping out. "For a lot of my friends living in the city, you know, it was kind of an adventure to be planting an orchard." He had the same knack for persuading people with land to let him use some of it for his project. By 1982, he had planted nine hundred seedlings-from the Blandy collection along with an eclectic gathering of seeds he'd found over the course of his travels-at the University of Maryland Wye Research and Education Center. A few years later, he planted another six hundred at the university's Western Maryland research center in Keedysville. And for the next dozen years, he devoted his weekends and vacations to his trees.

While pawpaws won't be available in supermarkets during his lifetime, they are starting to appear more widely in farmers' markets, and as a fruit breeder, Peterson takes the long view. It may be centuries before pawpaws are as well known as, say, blueberries. In that sense, we're still in the fruit's infancy. But he has helped birth the baby. He has done what he set out to do.



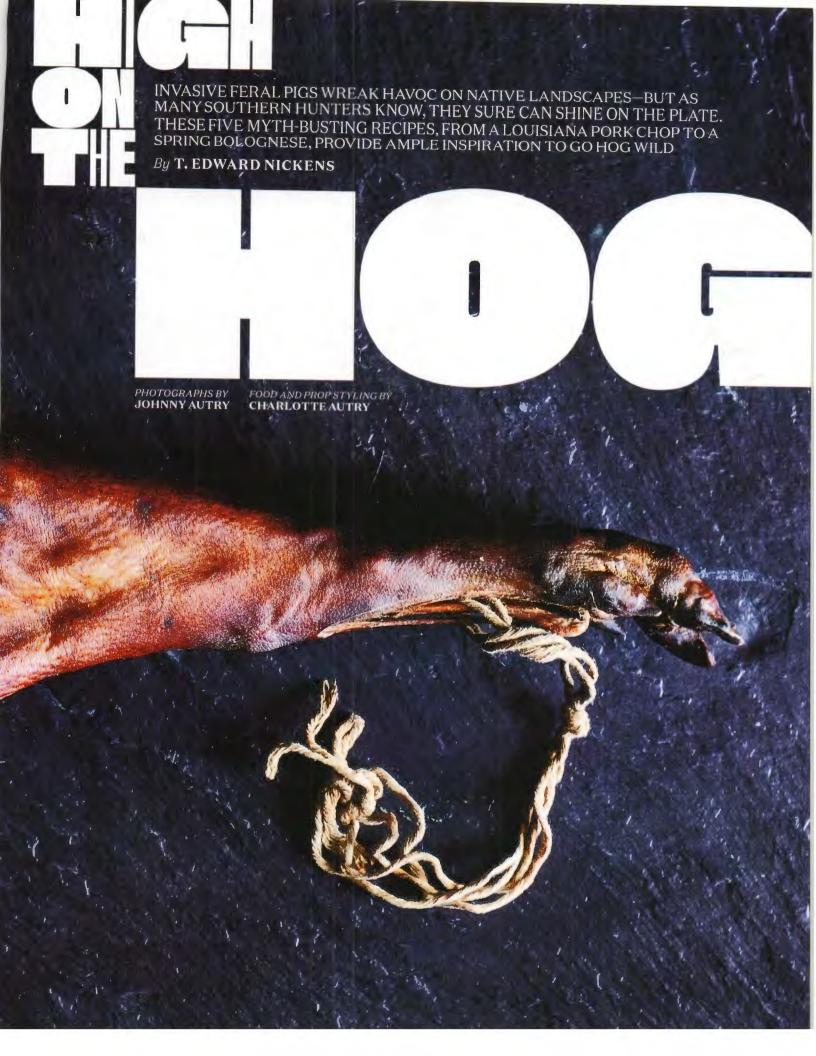
FTER TASTING PETERSON'S VARIETIES, I WAS HALF AFRAID that they had spoiled me for wild fruit, which is less consistent and seedier. But then Paula Smith called last September. She's not the type for small talk. "They're ready," she said. "Pick me

up at seven tomorrow morning." I'd found a few good trees myself by then, but I knew she'd have more and better trees than I did.

The next morning we were back in the woods along the Potomac, shaking trees and dodging pawpaws as they thudded down. The first ones I tried weren't great. Two weren't ripe. Two were okay but had a slightly bitter aftertaste. I resolved to try a few more. I picked the next one up, sliced it open, sucked the flesh from the peel, and spat the seeds. "How is it?" Smith asked.

It was September on my tongue, sweet and luscious to the very end. "It's amazing." G





Un. If we were, few would sneer, or snort, or wrinkle their noses and push back from the table when presented with a serving of rich, cognac-colored daube de sanglier. But place a crock of wild-hog stew on most American tables and that grating sound you hear might be chair legs scraping hardwood. ¶ That's changing, and in ways that should delight hunters, cooks, and others who have embarked on this most postmodern of culinary journeys: the path to loving the wild hog. That feral hogs are an overpopulated blight on the South and beyond is undisputed. That they have an emerging place in both restaurant and home kitchens is an increasingly accepted truth. Rich and robust, wild hog meat can span the flavor spectrum, from sweet to earthy, as the animals tend to take on the terroir of their environs, be they acorn-rich hardwood ridges and bottoms or cornfields bordered by wild swamp. And the fact that they root up and wreck both wild and cultivated landscapes puts them at odds with those trying to conserve fragile wetlands and plots of heritage vegetables alike. ¶ "They are a morally unambiguous animal to hunt, and I love hunting for them just about anywhere," says Jesse Griffiths, an Austin, Texas, chef whose hunting and butchering classes-and cookbooks, including his forthcoming The Hog Book-have changed many minds about wild game. "They are invasive and destructive, and by hunting wild hogs, you feel that you are accomplishing an ecologically good deed. And they're actually delicious. But there is so much misinformation and myth about cooking wild hogs." \ And therein lies the problem: A wild hog comes with only two hams, but a lot of buts. But they're tough. But they're gamy. But they're hard to cook. ¶ These five chefs, and their five recipes, should help do away with those conjunctional interjections. Their inspired dishes elevate the fulsome elegance of wild-hog meat while tamping down the uncultivated aspects that have saddled it with a bad rap. And they should inspire you to give wild hog a try, if only on a plate. Butcher shops and meat purveyors such as the Ingram, Texas-based Broken Arrow Ranch and the renowned D'Artagnan are good starting places. ¶"What's fun about these big meats is that they give you so much room to move," says chef Matt Bolus, of the 404 Kitchen in Nashville. "They handle plenty of pepper heat and strong accoutrements like mustards. You can deglaze the pan with flavors like whiskey and brandy. And there's more margin for error. You don't want to overcook any wild game, but cooking wild hog is not like you're babying truffles on the stove."

THE CAJUN CHOP A WILD PORK CHOP WITH A LOUISIANA PEDIGREE



few years ago, Isaac Toups drove into his father's deer camp on the Louisiana-Mississippi line to find that his dad had shot and skinned a wildhog, rubbed down the whole carcass with salt, pepper, and Creole mustard, and had it waiting for him in a giant cooler. "The only chef's tool I had was my pocketknife," Toups recalls, "but we went to work."

Toups wrapped the hog in chicken wire, threaded two lengths of rebar through the carcass for handles, and slow-roasted it over wood from an oak that had fallen nearby. "That was some rudimentary shit," he says, laughing. "But now they begme to come back every year." Not all of Toups's efforts are so elemental. He spent a decade working the stoves of Emeril Lagasse's kitchens, and as chef and owner of the acclaimed Toups' Meatery in New Orleans, the proud Cajun-his family has been in Louisiana for three hundred years—has been a James Beard Award semifinalist three times. Wild hog, he says, "has a definite role in the Cajun repertoire." While he often uses healthy doses of aromatics such as cumin and coriander, this pork chop relies on a tangy sweet gastrique. "It's simple, just syrup, butter, and vinegar," Toups explains. "But the first time I put it in my mouth, jack, it close to knocked me down." His version is characteristically hyperlocal, an alchemical brew of Louisianaborn Steen's cane syrup and cane vinegar. ¶ The domesticated-pig version of this recipe is a Toups' Meatery staple he serves over his signature dirty rice. But using wild hog deepens the taste—and the experience. "The brine helps keep the chop juicy since you have to go with a little higher temperature on the wild boar," he says. "It's intense and earthy, and the more you eat, the more you get that wild goodness just ingrained in you."

Double-Cut Pork Chops with Cane Syrup Gastrique

Yield: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

For the pork chops and brine: I gal. water I cup dark brown sugar I cup kosher salt 2 thsp. whole black peppercorns 4 bay leaves 2 (20-oz.) bonein double-cut pork chops (not frenched) Ice (lots of it) 4 tbsp. unsalted butter (1/2 stick) Dirty rice, for serving* Sliced green onions, for garnish

For the cane syrup gastrique: I cup cane syrup (or molasses) 1 cup cane vinegar (or cider vinegar)

PREPARATION

Brine the chops: Combine water, brown sugar, salt. peppercorns, and bay leaves in a large pot and bring to a boil. Simmer for 20 minutes, then give it a good stir to make sure all the salt and sugar are dissolved. In a 3-gallon food-safe bucket, add the brine and enough ice until you have exactly 11/2 gallons of brine. Once the brine is cold, place the

pork chops in brine, cover, and refrigerate for 24 hours. Remove chops from brine and pat dry with paper towels. Season heavily with more salt and fresh-ground black pepper.

Make the gastrique: In a saucepan, combine cane syrup and cane vinegar. Bring to a boil over medium heat and cook until the liquid has reduced to 1 cup. about 20 minutes. There's no need to stir, but watch closely, as it likes to burn. You can make this in larger batches. and the shelf life is pretty much infinite. Store in a sealed iar (does not need refrigeration).

Grill the chops: Preheat grill to high. Preheat oven to 400°F, Grill pork chop (even bone side) for 2 to 3 minutes on each side to get really hard grill marks, Put chops in a roasting pan and top each with 2 tbsp. butter. Roast for 8 to 10 minutes. until it reaches at least 145°F internal temperature, Allow chops to rest for 3 minutes in the pan. Before serving, dip them on all sides in the juices and butter that remain in the pan.

To serve: Place pork chops on top of dirty rice, and drizzle 1/4 cup gastrique over each. Garnish with green onions.

*For Toups's dirty rice recipe, visit gardenandgun.com/recipe/dirty-rice.



BOAR WITH ALL THE FIXINGS A YUCATÁN-INSPIRED APPROACH TO WILD-BOAR BACKSTRAP

esse Griffiths's first book, Afield: A Chef's Guide to Preparing and Cooking Wild Game and Fish, was a soulful revelation on the nourishments-physical, mental, and spiritual-of wild eating. Now he's on a mission to demystify wild-hog cooking. Due this spring, his next opus, The Hog Book: A Chef's Guide to Hunting, Preparing and Cooking Wild Pigs, includes more than a

hundred wild-hog recipes, plus deep dives into hog hunting, butchering, and the animals' natural and cultural history. "I've taught many classes on butchering and cooking venison, and the elephant in the room is always the wild hog," he says. "Someone always raises their hand and says, 'I know this is a class about deer, but..." ¶ Griffiths's cookbook writing is a side gig to his real twenty-five-hour-a-day job, running his regionally focused Dai Due Butcher Shop & Supper Club in Austin and his New School of Traditional Cookery, with immersive classes devoted to hunting, fishing, and butchering skills. "There's long been a one-size-fits-all approach to cooking wild hogs," he laments. "But a wild hog can be fifteen pounds or three hundred fifty pounds. It's disingenuous to approach them all the same way." In his book, Griffiths divides wild hogs into four classes—small hog, medium hog, large sow, and large boar—and exults in the possibilities of each. This bright, accessible table stunner is a winner, he says, because it works with hogs of any size—and it might just be "the end-all recipe for big boar backstraps." Poc chuc has roots in the Yucatán, where pounded-thin pork steak is marinated in a sour orange concoction and cooked "over a ripping hot fire," Griffiths says, "preferably something with character such as mesquite." Sour oranges can be difficult to find, but it's easy to get close with his combination of lime and navel or Valencia orange juice. His two salsas—one a traditional habanero sauce, the other a thicker avocado and mint potion—interact with the robust flavor of the meat in different ways: one a spicy exclamation point on the edgy notion of a meal of wild hog, the other a pleasingly tame approach.

Boar Poc Chuc

Yield: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

11/2 lb. boar backstrap or boneless shoulder with some fat left on, cut into 1-inch-thick slices Salt and pepper 2 sour oranges. juiced; or juice of Inavelor Valencia orange and 2 limes combined 4 cloves, crushed 6 allspice berries, crushed 2 medium onions I lime, juiced Vegetable oil, for grilling

To serve: 2 cups thinly sliced green cabbage 2 avocados, sliced 2 ripe tomatoes, sliced 2 radishes, sliced

12 corn tortillas. warmed Salsas (recipes follow)

PREPARATION Between two sheets of plastic wrap, pound the pork slices to a thickness of 1/4 inch. Season each piece with salt and pepper and layer in a glass or ceramic baking dish. Mix together the citrus juice and crushed spices and pour over the cutlets. Allow to marinate overnight. refrigerated, or for at

least 2 hours if you're in a hurry.

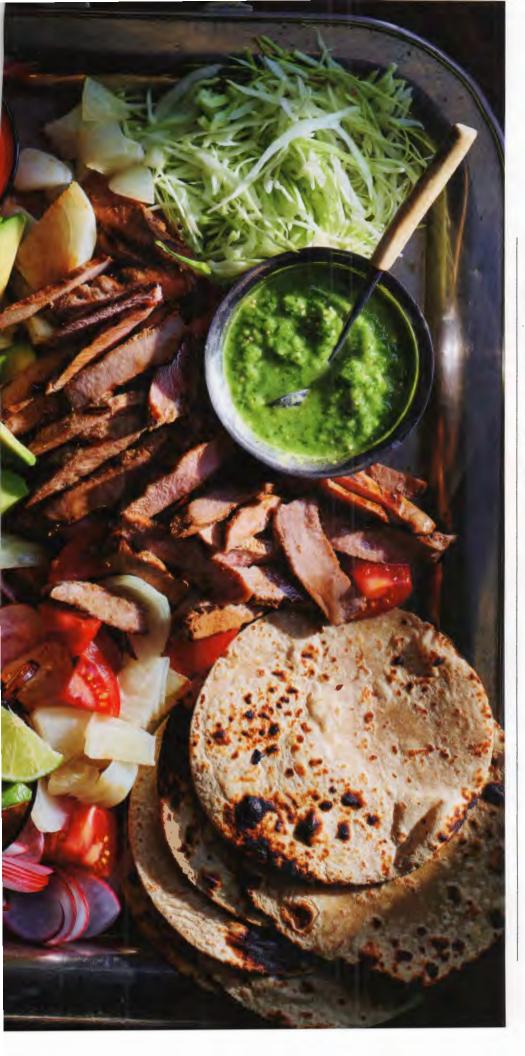
Start a hot fire. Once you have a hot bed of coals (or a hot gas grill), place the unpeeled onions directly on the coals or on the grate if using a gas grill. Turn them every 10 minutes for about 25 to 30 minutes until they're very black on the outside. The onions will look pretty burnt, but you want them charred on the exterior while the insides roast. Remove and allow to cool. Once

"I'VE TAUGHT MANY CLASSES ON VENISON, AND THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM IS ALWAYS THE WILD HOG"

onions are cool enough to handle, cut off the ends and peel off any burnt exterior, leaving the tender, roasted cores. Chop the insides of the onion roughly and season with lime juice and a

little salt. Set aside at room temperature.

Stoke the fire to get it really hot again Clean the grill grates well with a brush and oil them lightly with a bit of vegetable oil on a towel. Wipe off any



of the crushed spices from the pork and lay on the hottest parts of the grill. Grill pork for 3 to 4 minutes per side, getting some good grill marks. Once both sides are seared, remove to a cutting board and let rest for a couple of minutes. Slice thinly and serve over the cabbage, with the roasted onion, avocado, tomato (season the avocado and tomato with a sprinkle of salt), radishes, warmed tortillas, and salsas.

Habanero Salsa Yield: about I cup

INGREDIENTS

2-4 habanero peppers, stemmed and seeded 1/4 medium onion, roughly chopped 2 cloves garlic, peeled

1 cup water 2 limes, juiced Salt to taste

PREPARATION

Combine peppers, onion, garlic, and water in a medium pot and bring to a simmer. Simmer until tender, about 15 minutes. Puree until smooth, and season with lime juice and salt.

Avocado-Mint Salsa Yield: about

1 pint

INGREDIENTS

4 ripe tomatillos or 3 small unripe green tomatoes, stems removed, coarsely chopped

I-3 jalapeño or serrano peppers, stems removed, chopped A handful of fresh cilantro, roughly chopped A handful of fresh mint, roughly chopped 2 limes, juiced 1/4 medium onion, roughly chopped 4 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed I large ripe avocado, peeled Salt to taste

PREPARATION

Combine all ingredients in a food processor and puree until mostly smooth but with some texture, adding water a tablespoon at a time if too thick. Season to taste with salt. Keep refrigerated until serving.



SECRET SAUCE FRESH PESTO LIVENS UP THIS BOAR BOLOGNESE

Spring Wild Boar Bolognese

Yield: 4-6 servings

INGREDIENTS I head cauliflower, roughly chopped 2 tbsp. canola or grape-seed oil 21b. wild boar, ground 2 oz. butter 2 cloves garlic. finely chopped 1/2 medium onion. diced small 1/2 carrot, diced small Istalk celery, diced small 1/4 fennel bulb, diced small 2 tbsp. rice vinegar 10 oz. white wine 1/2 cup heavy cream I bunch fresh Italian parsley, roughly chopped I cup fresh basil, roughly chopped 6 scallions, roughly chopped Fennel fronds from above, roughly chopped 1/2 cup olive oil 1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated Kosher salt, to taste

White pepper,

Lemonjuice, to taste

totaste

PREPARATION

Boil the chopped cauliflower in salted water until very tender. Strain out all the water, reserving some, and puree cauliflower in a blender until velvety smooth, You may need to use a little of the cooking liquid to get it to spin, but don't use too much; you want the puree to be on the thicker side. Season to taste with salt and white pepper.

In a pot large enough to fit all the ingredients, heat the canola or grape-seed oil and sear the ground boar. Once the boar is caramelized, strain off any excess fat. Add butter and garlio to the meat and cook until light brown. Add onion, carrot, celery, and diced fennel, and cook until soft.

Deglaze the pot with rice vinegar and white wine. Scrape up any caramelized bits off the bottom of the pot. Reduce wine and vinegar until almost dry.

Add the cauliflower puree and the cream. Stir to incorporate evenly, adding a little of the cauliflower liquid to loosen if needed. Simmer for 20-30 minutes

While the Bolognese is simmering. make a pesto by oombining the parsley. basil, scallions, and fennel fronds in a food processor bowl. Drizzle 1/4 cup of the olive



efore landing in Nashville, chef Matt Bolus graduated from Le Cordon Bleu in London, worked knives at the city's Blagden's fishmongers and Allens of Mayfair butcher shop, and served as a butcher and fishmonger at Charleston, South Carolina's

esteemed FIG. He opened his 404 Kitchen in Nashville in 2013. But Bolus, a passionate hunter, loves going back to his roots. He grewup in a log cabin in East Tennessee and would visit his grandparents' farm in Kentucky, where his grandmother paid him a quarter for every bullfrog he could gig. ¶ His Bolognese sauce began life as a "family meal" for his staff, and it became so popular. he says, "we jumped off in all kinds of directions." He's made the sauce with beef, pork, black bear, lobster, and mixed seafood. In the summer, he'll bring in yellow tomatoes and peaches and deglaze the pan with gin. In the fall, pumpkin and sage provide a seasonal backdrop. But spring, he says, is a trickier time for the gravitas that comes with a meal of wild boar. "Part of our brain is saying that it's time to get our bikini bodies in shape," he says, laughing, "while another part is not quite ready to give up on eating big." The bright tastes of the herbs and citrus in this sauce help cut through the richness of the boar meat, which Bolus treats with particular care. Overfilling a pan tends to simply steam ground meat, he says, which adds an odd texture and does nothing for the flavor. Instead, he creates thin burger-like patties and cooks them hot to caramelize the surface and leave behind copious amounts of crispy, browned fond. "Really push that ground meat," he advises. "Get it dark brown, and I'm talking about damn near burnt."

oil over and process on high to start breaking it all up. Add pine nuts. Parmesan, a pinch of salt, and 3 to 4 twists of white pepper, and again process on high speed. Add remaining olive oil and pulse to just combine.

Taste both the Bolognese sauce and the pesto, adjusting the seasoning with salt, white pepper, and lemon juice.

To serve, toss your favorite pasta (cooked and ready to serve) with the Bolognese sauce as desired. Add pesto to your liking and toss just to combine. Sprinkle liberally with grated Parmesan.

THIS SAUCE BEGAN LIFE AS A "FAMILY MEAL" FOR HIS STAFF, AND IT BECAME SO POPULAR. "WE JUMPED OFF IN ALL KINDS OF DIRECTIONS"



GOING WHOLE HAM **CURING YOUR OWN WILD-HOG** HAM IS A LESSON IN PATIENCE. WITH A STUNNING REWARD

he taste of wild game "is incomparable," David Bancroft says. "You can put any label on any cut of meat-free-range, hormonefree, antibiotic-free, stress-free, pasture-raised-and it will never give you what a truly wild animal does." And for a hunter, there are qualities that go beyond labels. "What I like most," Bancroft says,

"are the added notes of responsibility and self-sufficiency." ¶ An avid hunter and gardener, Bancroft opened his lauded Acre in downtown Auburn, Alabama, in 2013, and his barbecue restaurant, Bow & Arrow, in 2018. He's a charcuterie aficionado, and Acre partners with the Auburn University Lambert-Powell Meats Laboratory to fine-tune humanely raised and artfully butchered meats. This cured wild-hog ham is a labor of love. From start to finish, the process will take months, and it will be complete when it is complete. "The ham is ready when it has lost a third of its weight," Bancroft explains, and how long that takes is a function of the environment in which it is hung. "It's a very accurate way of measuring," he says, "but it stinks when it comes to the patience game." ¶ If you want to try curing your own ham, Bancroft suggests you first find the right frame of mind. To help while away the time, he tries to "step into character and tap into the artistry and appreciation of our ancestors who approached these animals in this way. There's a sense of intentionality about curing a ham." Revel in the process, he advises, and you won't rush the final product.

Wild Hog Country Ham

Yield: 1 whole ham

INGREDIENTS

1 (15 to 20 lb.) wildboar ham, skin on (hoof optional) 1 cup bourbon

For the cure: Sea salt: Multiply ham weight in grams by 0.04 Instacure #2 curing salt: Multiply by 0.0025 Fresh-ground black pepper: Multiply by 0.003 Brown sugar: Multiply by 0.01

"STEP INTO CHARACTER AND TAP INTO THE ARTISTRY OF **OUR ANCESTORS** WHO APPROACHED THESE ANIMALS IN THIS WAY"

PREPARATION

Scald and scrape the ham.

Weigh ham in grams. Write down or document the starting weight. Using the preceding formulas, combine all cure ingredients in a medium bowl.

Rinse ham in bourbon and baste with bourbon several times.

Pack the cure into every crevice, using every bit of cure. Add a little additional sea salt around the hoof and ball joint if using a hoofed ham.

Store in refrigerator skin side down 2 days for every pound. After 10 days, scoop up oure that has fallen off ham and reapply to top of ham.

After cure process, rinse cure off ham with running water. Place in smokehouse or smokerand cold-smoke 6 to 10 hours at no more than 75°F.

Hang ham in a cool dark place to dry age between 40°F and 60°F at around 50 percent relative humidity. Dry age until ham weight reduces by 33 percent of original weight. Bancroft likes to let it age for another couple of months for even more intense flavor.

CALLING IN THE HOG

A source for USDA-approved wild-hog meat and other game goodness

When Broken Arrow Ranch founder Mike Hughes was working with USDA meat inspectors in the 1980s to hammer out a process for inspecting wild hog, he was asked how he could prove that the animals were free-roaming and not simply domesticated pigs he was passing off as wild. He fired off a proposition: If an inspector was willing to walk into a pen with his trapped wild hogs and stay there for at least two minutes, he wouldn't call them wild. That letter wound up framed and hung in the USDA offices in Washington, D.C. And Hughes's Ingram, Texas-based operation is now one of the nation's largest purveyors of wild game, selling wild hog and sustainably harvested deer and antelope to chefs around the country and a growing number of home cooks.

Broken Arrow Ranch sells about 55,000 pounds of wild-hog meat each year, taken from 1,100 to 1,500 animals. The animals are trapped on Texas ranches and transported to a slaughterhouse near the company's headquarters. Butchering is then done at Broken Arrow, where the meat is frozen and held at 10°F for at least twenty days before it's sold. "There's absolutely a growing interest in wild-boar meat," says the ranch's second-generation owner, Chris Hughes. "And let's be honest, there are a lot of wild boar out there that need to be eaten." While ground boar meat is Broken Arrow's best seller, Hughes is particularly fond of the shoulder roast. "Put some wild-boar sausage in there," he says, "and roast it with fennel and green onion and aromatics. I have to say: It's pretty darngood."-T.E.N.

MEATBALLS À LA MARFA A LITTLE EUROPEAN. A LITTLE TEXAN, THIS DISH IS ALL COMFORT

Wild Boar Meatballs in Whiskev-Almond Sauce

Yield: 8 (2-inch) meatballs

INGREDIENTS

Forthe meatballs: Itbsp. unsalted butter Itbsp. olive oil I small sweet onion or 1/2 large onion, finely chopped 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped 2 tbsp. parsley, chopped Pinch grated nutmeg Pinch cinnamon Pinch ground sage 1/2 tsp. salt I tsp. white pepper 11b. ground wild boar 1/2 cup panko bread crumbs legg, whisked

For the whiskeyalmond sauce: 1 tbsp. unsalted butter I thsp. olive oil 1/2 cup blanched almonds, preferably sliced (but slivered works) 2 cloves garlic. finely chopped I slice torn bread 1/2 cup whiskey (such as WhistlePig rue or Garrison Brothers Balmorhea bourbon) 2 cups rich vegetable or chicken stock (plus more to loosen the sauce as needed) Salt and pepper, to taste

PREPARATION

Forthe meatballs: Heat butter and oil in a pan on medium heat. Sauté onion for a couple of minutes to soften, then add garlic, parsley, nutmeg, cinnamon, sage, salt, and white pepper. Continue to stir over medium heat until onion and garlic are soft and translucent. Remove from heat and let cool to room temperature.

In a bowl, mix the ground boar, panko. and egg until completely incorporated. When onion mixture is cool, combine with boar mixture. Let rest in refrigerator for at least an hour (up to 24

hours) covered with plastic wrap.

Shape and roll meat into 21/2-inch balls and place on a sheet pan.

For whiskeyalmond sauce: Heat butter and oil in a pan on medium heat until butter is melted. Add almonds, garlic, and torn bread, and sauté for about 5 minutes, Sprinkle in a pinch of salt and pepper and continue to heat through, taking care not to let ingredients burn.

Once sauce is hot, add whiskey. Let the mixture come to a boil, then remove from heat and let cool slightly. Blend on high in blender until smooth and add the stock in a stream to loosen the sauce to a creamy consistency. Season totaste.

To cook and serve: Heat 3 tbsp. oil and/or butter in a pan, Cook shaped meatballs over medium heat until browned all around and cooked through.

"ARE THEY EATING ACORNS OR PRICKLY PEAR? WILD HOGS ARE A COMPLETE EXPRESSION OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT"

Pour sauce in the pan and heat up to a simmer.

Serve in a lipped dish with fried sage and toasted almond slivers as garnish as well as rustic bread to son up the sauce. Serve with a whiskey neat.

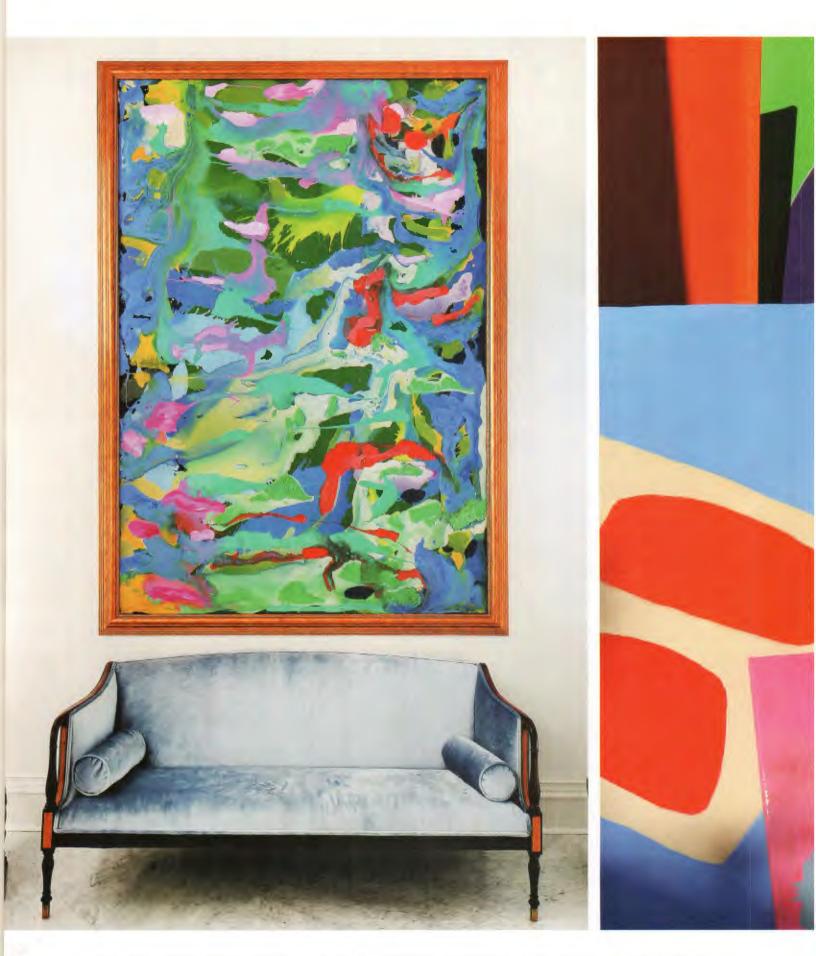
he first time Alexandra Gates visited Marfa-a small high-desert West Texas ranching village with an outsize reputation as an arts center-the California native had a surprisingly visceral reaction. "Marfa is surrounded by these beautiful ranching landscapes," she recalls. "They may be complete opposites in so many ways, but I had the exact same

her grandparents in the foothills of Switzerland's Alps. Her grandfather often went fishing in the early hours before work, and she would wake to find the bathtub filled with fish, which she and her grandmother would clean and cook, "Between that and having so many international friends from growing up in California," she says, "I developed a very European perspective toward food." After stints in New York kitchens, Gates moved to the Lone Star State with her husband, a Texas native, and continued her eclectic culinary approach in Austin; She ran an acclaimed food trailer serving Spanish-inflected foods, and served as the executive chef for the boutique Hotel Saint Cecilia. She opened her Marfarestaurant, Cochineal, in a 1920 adobe building and promptly began melding her heritage of European cuisine with a full-throttle love of Texas. "I immediately fell in love with the wild-game scene," she says, and the restaurant nearly always offers some brand of game, from nilgai antelope to elk and quail. And wild hog. "Sometimes they are very sweet, and sometimes really herbaceous," she explains. "Are they eating acorns or prickly pear? They are a complete expression of their environment." This dish articulates Gates's international influences. She first discovered meatballs in an almond sauce on a trip to Spain. "So Itried to Americanize that with the whiskey," she says. And the addition

of wild hog makes it a delicious love letter to her adopted Texas home. G

reaction upon seeing New York for the first time: I have to live here." ¶ Gates's mother is Swiss, and she grew up spending her summers with





 $Left to \ right: An untitled \ painting \ by \ Cora \ Kelley \ Ward \ in \ collectors \ Tim \ and \ Dana \ Miller's \ home \ in \ Lafayette, \ Louisiana; \ a \ selection \ of \ Ward's \ artworks \ from \ the \ 1960s \ and \ '70s; \ Ward \ in \ 1950; \ a \ 1959 \ a \ crylic \ painting \ by \ Ward \ in \ the \ Millers' \ home.$



HER NAME WAS

Cora Kelley Ward,

and they'd arranged her paintings in piles on the floor of a loading bay. At the start of the sale there had been around eight hundred works to choose from. Now, four days later, there were fewer than three hundred left, and the price for a canvas had been reduced to a dollar a square foot, down from two dollars.

I looked out at the bizarre scene and did the math. For \$541 could buy a painting big enough to cover the better part of my living room wall. Dinner last night had cost more than that.

It was May 9, 2012, at the Hilliard Art Museum on the campus of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. I wasn't sure about the giant pictures of what looked like Easter eggs, but I did like the colorful action painting displayed at checkout. Gobs of blue and salmon floated on its surface, each form carved with a loose black line. The painting was a classic example of mid-1950s abstract expressionism.

"Any more like this?" I asked a museum worker.

"Too late," she answered and gave her head a shake.

I didn't need more art-my wife and I already owned hundreds of paintings, many of them stored in closets and under bedsbut my friend Tim Miller had pestered me with calls until I made the two-hour drive from my home near New Orleans. Tim and his wife, Dana, are longtime collectors of Southern art. "I'm thinking about buying everything that's left," he said. "I should have enough in my checking account."

The artist had experimented with different styles over her career, and the sale still had examples from her geometric, color-field, and pour periods. Cora Kelley Ward had died from cancer in 1989, and her family stored the collection for twenty years before donating it to the Hilliard.

"Incredible, huh?" Tim said. He was picking overwatercolors on a folding table, each priced at fifty cents.

"It's nuts," I told him.

Born in 1920, Ward grew up in and around Eunice in the state's Cajun country. There are plenty of rice and crawfish farms

in that part of the world, but it would be a stretch to describe it as a breeding ground for modern artists. She moved to New Orleans at seventeen, became a registered nurse, and married a doctor named Simon Ward. By all accounts, the marriage was an unhappy one, at least for Cora. In response to a deep personal need to make art, she began taking classes at the Newcomb Art School, even as Si Ward belittled her dream of becoming a painter. The more she filled up canvases with abstract imagery, the less she resembled the pretty, obsequious wife he'd married.

It's not every young woman from the rural Deep South who'd trade in her doctor husband for life as an artist, but Ward did just that. In 1949, she enrolled in Black Mountain College, an experimental school near Asheville, North Carolina. For Cora Ward, Black Mountain provided an invitation to learn from other innovative artists and to build new friendships, one of them with the critic Clement Greenberg, who taught art criticism and modern painting and sculpture. From there, Ward moved to Chicago and studied at the IIT Institute of Design, also known as the New Bauhaus. She landed in Greenwich Village in 1955.

Ward paid the bills by working as a nurse. Her paintings turned up in solo and group exhibitions, but success came in modest measure, even while others in her circle won acclaim, made fortunes, and helped define an era.

After Ward died, two of her sisters flew to New York to settle her estate. They discovered 1,100 of her paintings and drawings stored in the building where she had lived. Most were in Ward's small studio loft, but the sisters also found pieces squirreled away in the basement.

Ward had never remarried or had children. The art was her legacy and her gift to the world.

THE YEAR 2020 MARKED THE CENTENNIAL of Cora Ward's birth, and her work is finally being discovered and celebrated far beyond the region that produced her. Since the Hilliard sale, three of her paintings have sold at auction, and one of them achieved a hammer price of \$1,000-not bad for a small canvas that the museum would've sold for six bucks. Larger examples have brought as much as \$6,000 in private sales. And last year, one of her paintings hung in an exhibition at the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center called Question Everything! The Women of Black Mountain College.

In 2015, the New York Times published a photo of Ward in a story about the school, and two years later, her name appeared in

EXHIBITION

A selection of works, all untitled, by the artist Cora Kelley Ward



Watercolor on paper



Acrylic on canvas

news reports when a possible Jackson Pollock turned up in an Arizona man's garage. The man had inherited the painting and other avant-garde work from his sister in New York, Images of the would-be Pollock, if authenticated worth no less than \$10 million, were shown with other pieces from the hoard, including a canvas by Ward.

But such attention was still a long way off when Tim Miller approached me in the museum. "Well, what do you think?" he whispered. "Do I write the check?"

I didn't know how to advise him. Earlier that morning, I'd looked for Ward's name in several online art databases and come up empty. Likewise, a Google search had provided little. Wardhad also been a photographer, and a website credited her for candid photos she'd taken of Clement Greenberg and her artist friends. But back then that was the extent of Ward's presence online.

The credits put Ward on the scene, but they also suggested a remove. Why did she seem more like a witness to the party than a participant in it?

In the end, Tim and Dana bought ninetythree paintings. I chose twenty-one.

As I was carrying my load to the parking lot, a museum worker handed me a sheet of paper with an essay by Greenberg, written for a memorial exhibition that he'd curated the year after Ward died. Although they'd been friends for forty years, it was the only thing he'd ever written about her. Cora Kelley Ward's art will last, he said, "as some far better-known art of this time won't."

Greenberg, who died in 1994, was arguably the most important art critic of the twentieth century. He'd given a powerful voice to abstract expression is mwhen most of the world thought it was a joke. If he truly thought Ward's work had the potential to endure, why hadn't he said so while she was alive?

What a shame, I thought. Cora Ward had devoted her life to making these pictures. and they'd been peddled in a fundraiser that would bring in only \$10,919, for an average of \$13.65 apiece.

"Do you think these things could pay for our kids' college one day?" Tim said. He stopped me before I could answer. "A lady in there said she was going to use one as a rug."

Somewhere on the road home that night. I pulled over to see how my cargo was traveling. As I raised the pickup's bed cover, a semi blew by and dumped light on the pile of rolled-up canvases.

"Who were you?" I mumbled.

NOT LONG AFTER, I GOT ON THE PHONE AND started calling people, the first of them Lee A. Gray, then the Hilliard's curator.

Ward was like thousands of other artists who pursue a dream and in the end go unrecognized, Gray said. After receiving the collection, she sent five or six of Ward's smaller, late-career paintings to a commercial gallery in New York. She wanted to gauge their potential value. "They said the colors were too seventies, too muted," said Gray, who now works as an English teacher in Hungary. "They didn't think the paintings would be popular with their clients."

It was the only gallery she contacted,

although one of Ward's brothers, Maurice Badon Jr., approached a gift shop in Hammond, Louisiana, the town where he lived. "They told me, 'If your sister painted magnolias or antebellum homes, I could handle that. But abstract expressionism I don't know about," Badon told me in 2014 (he died in 2017).

The Hilliard didn't have enough storage space to accommodate such a large donation, and what to do with it weighed heavily on its director at the time, Mark A. Tullos Jr. After discussions with his staff, Tullos decided to offer Ward's work to peer museums, among them major institutions in New York, all of which "turned them down flat," Tullos said. "They all asked the same questions: What was her contribution to the movement? Why haven't we ever heard of her?"

But other museums, particularly Southern ones, were not so dismissive. They liked the art, and they liked Ward's story. The Mobile Museum of Art took seventy-three paintings, more than any other institution.

"I just responded to it," said Paul Richelson, Mobile's chief curator when I spoke with him in 2014, six years before his death. "She was clearly an artist of quality, and she did exhibit, she was in the mix, she knew the important artists of her generation. This is a very mature, very serious artist."

Tullos spoke with Badon and floated the idea of a sale. Badon agreed to it. "The alternative," Tullos said, "was to throw the art in the dumpster. I thought the sale was the best path. Let's cultivate collectors; let's teach. Even if they are paying fifteen



Oil on linen



India ink on canvas



Oil on linen



Watercolor on paper

dollars for a canvas, it gets the painting in their home. And they're not going to Walmart and buying a reproduction."

OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS, I TALKED

to other art historians, dealers, and collectors. I visited the homes of two of Ward's siblings. I called her old artist friends, one of whom spoke to me from Mumbai at two o'clock in the morning.

Why hadn't Ward been bigger? Whenever I asked the question, Clement Greenberg's name came up. Ward's family and friends regretted that he hadn't done more to get her work noticed. He had championed Helen Frankenthaler, his lover for five years before Ward entered the scene. Why couldn't he have done the same for Ward?

"Clem was a complicated person," said the artist Susan Weil. "He had people he got behind and made a big fuss over. That's just the way he was. He wasn't very generous in that way."

One day Greenberg asked Ward why she didn't give up painting and find a nice guy to marry. He might've been joking, but Ward took it as a rebuke of her work, and when she repeated his words to friends, she did so with a hurt look on her face.

"I think so, yes," said Janice "Jenny" Van Horne, Greenberg's widow, who died

Ward at work at Rlack

near Asheville, North

Carolina, in 1949; two

display at the Hilliard

Lafayette, Louisiana.

Mountain College

of her paintings on

Art Museum in

in 2015, when I asked her that same year if her husband ever had a romantic relationship with Ward. "But I also think I should've had you vetted before I agreed to this."

It was curious to me how my appreciation for Ward's art grew as I learned more about her. At first dismissive of the

pieces that depicted objects that looked like Easter eggs, I began to admire them once I understood that they were solely about color and referenced form as an afterhought. The paintings I liked best dated to the late 1950s and early '60s and showed jots of color scattershot against mostly white backgrounds, rather like pebbles in a stream. In my office I taped a photo of Ward over my desk, there for when I needed a lift. The great American photographer Harry Callahan took the picture, and it dates to 1950, after Cora was liberated from Si Ward. She's wearing along coat over period clothing, dark hair swept back, lips parted. Her eyes are fixed on some point in the distance-far, too far away.

"What was she like?" was the first question I asked those who knew her. They almost all answered the same way: "Oh, she was beautiful." And then they helped me build the picture.

AT BLACK MOUNTAIN. A THEATER TEACHER was so taken with Ward's striking good looks that he arranged the modeling session with Callahan. The teacher told her she could make it in the movies if the art career didn't pan out.

She was as glamorous as "any Hollywood starlet," said the artist Gene Hedge, with whom I spoke in 2015, and who died in 2017. Hedge first met Ward in Chicago in the fall of 1949. "My first impression was beautiful, interesting, and in another league."

Ward stood just shy of five seven and weighed 120 pounds. She stayed in shape by walking and doing yoga. She read and collected books, and she wrote poems, stories, and at least one novel, none of them published in her lifetime. A perpetual student of her craft, she earned a master's degree in art from New York's Hunter College. One friend described her as a "seeker." She might've grown up Southern Baptist, but she was open to learning about other religions. Late in her life she became enthralled with G. I. Gurdjieff, a spiritual leader who promoted a method for achieving higher consciousness.

It was always a jolt when her New York friends saw her wearing a nurse's uniform. She was an artist, after all.

She drove a VW Beetle and liked good

clothes and good shoes. In her kitchen she had a toaster with only one slot, suggesting she intended to live her life alone. And though her career as an artist never did rise to the conventional definition of success, she didn't seem to care. Making the art was enough. Let her friends have the glory.

She'd found bliss elsewhere. "There are no words to describe this feeling of wholeness which blooms in me ... of being open to what is before me in great painting and drawing and sculpture," she wrote in her journal while touring Aix-en-Provence, the city in the South of France where Paul Cézanne lived and worked.

When it was time to paint, she would tell herfriends, "I'm going to be busy for two or three weeks. So I won't be able to see you. okay?"

They knew not to bother her.

For all her hard-won sophistication, she was forever a small-town girl from Louisiana and given to sentiment when recalling her roots. When she had guests over for dinner, she often served gumbo.

Only those closest to her knew the details of her upbringing, much of it tragic. Her mother, Mary "Missy" Lavergne, had just welcomed a baby girl named Monia when her husband, Olite Rachal, died suddenly from an unknown ailment. The minister who presided over Olite's funeral, Edward Kelly, was so struck by Missy's beauty that he set out to win her heart. He would become her second husband.

Missy was pregnant with Cora when Ed Kelly was diagnosed with tuberculosis.

"There was a second little house behind the house where they were living," said Jessica Balovich, one of Ward's sisters, who died in 2019. "Ed Kelly moved out of the main house and into the little one. And then he put up a wire fence between the two. Mother would bring Cora out to see him, and Cora would put her little hands between the wires to feel his hands. That



was as close as Cora ever got to her father."

After he died, Missy put her two girls in a Baptist orphanage. "Mother had a calling to be a missionary, but she needed an education and she had no way to support them," said Ward's brother Maurice.

Monia Joyner, formerly Monia Rachal, was two days shy of her 103rd birthday when she died this past October. "Over the years, whenever I'd see Cora, we'd bring up the orphanage and talk about it a little bit and then just drop it," she told me in a 2014 interview. "It was painful, but I think the experience hurt Cora more than it did me."

The girls were reunited with Missy only after she married Maurice Badon, a fellow student at the Acadia Baptist Academy. The couple would have five more children, and Missy always insisted that all seven kids be treated the same, even though Monia and Cora had different fathers. After high school, Ward left for New Orleans. She was working in a hospital when she met a young ob-gyn from South Carolina.

"Si was a tall, thin fellow. Wry sense of humor. Had that accent they have out there. A-bootinstead of about," said Ward's brother Maurice Badon Jr.

They married in 1941. After Si returned home from serving in the war, Cora told him she didn't want to be his wife anymore. He accused her of cheating on him. Cora denied it. Si arranged for her to see a psychiatrist with experience in relationship therapy. After meeting with Cora, the man told Si to let her go. Nothing was going to stop her from being an artist.

"Si didn't want her to be an artist. He wanted her to do exactly what he wanted,"

"She always wanted us to think she was doing well," said her sister Monia, "But I didn't understand her art. I remember saving once, 'Cora, why don't you paint me aduckor something?' I saw the look on her face and didn't go any further."

Ward once told Gene Hedge about the wire fence that had separated her from her father. Hedge wondered if it explained why Ward was such a solitary soul. She only grew more reclusive as she got older, and she refused all visitors once she realized she wasn't going to beat cancer. One ofher sisters, Vivian Greene, flew up from Houston, "Cora, please!" Vivian called out at Ward's door, Ward refused to let her in. Vivian returned to the airport and flew home. looked up from the art, I could tell how moved he was."

"Corawasadear & selfless friend," Greenberg would write later. "But I can confidently say that that doesn't sway me. It's only with these paintings of the '80s that I'm able to hail her art without reservation. That makes me glad-regretfully so because she's not here to read what I write."

After Ward's ashes were interred in a New York cemetery, her sisters Jessica and Vivian visited Greenberg at his apartment. "I told him, 'You didn't help Cora one goddamned little bit, Clem," Jessica said. "Clemsaid, 'I thought you were a Baptist and didn't curse.' I said, 'You're the only person in this whole world I would say that to."

Hedge told me he often remembered something Ward asked him toward the end, when her interest in spiritual matters intensified and she was spending less time making art: "Is painting still enough for you?"

"Yes," he answered, and then tried to explain why.

Ward didn't reply, but Hedge understood that she didn't need to.

OVER TIME, I COLLECTED THIRTY MORE OF Ward's paintings and twenty-seven more drawings, putting the total at seventyeight. My wife cut me a look every time I came home with another one.

Many who'd bought her work from the Hilliard refused to sell. They said her paintings had become part of their lives and they couldn't imagine living without them.

One day I stopped by the sprawling manse in Lafayette where Tim and Dana Miller live with their three young children. Tim and I were standing beneath chandeliers in the formal living room, and Ward's work decorated the walls. I pointed to a massive canvas and offered him \$5,000 for it.

"Not a chance," he said.

I pointed to an even larger canvas. Ward's carefully placed colors seemed to dance from one side of the painting to the other.

If only you were still with us, Cora, I thought, we could tell you how wonderful we think you are.

"Twelve," I said to Tim, the word so dry in my mouth I could barely get it out. "Twelve grand. Come on, old man. Sell it to me."

Less than three years had passed since the Hilliard sale, and the price was \$1,081 more than the museum had earned for its entire inventory.

Tim lowered his head. "Can't," he said. "I'm sorry, brother, but I just can't do it." G



said Cora's sister Jessica. "He was very controlling, and she was so artistic. Cora was lovely. She never would've been unfaithful. She tried with Si, she really did."

The divorce came in 1948. The last time Si saw her was when she boarded a train bound for Black Mountain. "Sithrew a fit," Jessica said. "He said the people there had loose morals and all that, and he tried to get us to stop her. But it was over, and she didn't have to answer to him anymore."

OLD CENSUS ROLLS SHOW THE SPELLING OF her father's name as Kelly, but Ward insisted on signing her canvases Kelley.

"Oh. no." her brother Maurice told me. "You didn't want to leave out that seconde. Cora was very particular about that."

Every summer, family traveled to New York and stayed with her at her studio. Ward returned home when she could, at least once a year.

One day Hedge walked over to Ward's place with the artist couple Susan Weil and Bernard Kirschenbaum. They knocked on the door but got no answer even though they sensed Ward was inside.

Hedge slipped a note expressing concern under the door. His phone was ringing when he got home. "I never heard her speak in anger except that one time," he said. "Leave me alone!" And that was it." Hedge didn't return to the apartment until after she died.

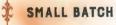
"The paintings from her friends that had always been on display were down on the floor facing the wall," he said. "Her own work, too. You didn't see any painting at all. So she had cleared out her life."

A short time later, Clement Greenberg arrived at the studio to see the work. Hedge had a key, and he let him in. "Clem had visited her studio before," Hedge said, "but there was a lot he'd never seen. When he

whiskey for the wandering spirit

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SOUTH SOUTH

TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE FOR THE SOUTHERN SOUL







Clockwise from top left: A guest room at the Trueheart Hotel; musician Johnny Nicholas at his Hill Top Cafe; outdoor seating at Signor Vineyards; Jill Elliott at her shop, Blackchalk.



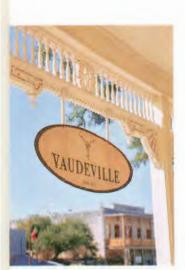


WEEKENDS

Fredericksburg's Big Texas Welcome

THE HILL COUNTRY HAVEN MARKS 175 YEARS THIS SPRING, AND A CREW OF LOCALS KEEP IT FLOURISHING

By Sallie Lewis





Above, from top: Vaudeville is both a shop and a restaurant; a queen butterfly lands on cosmos at Wildseed Farms. Right: Trueheart Hotel owners Nick and Alice Adair.

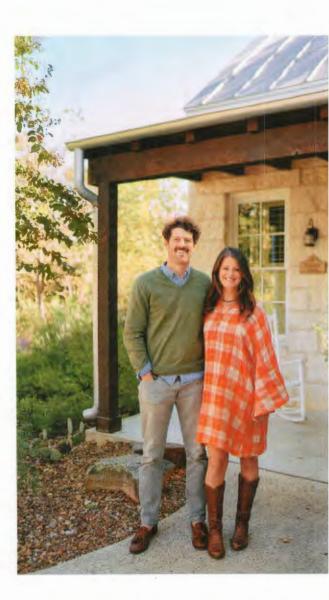
n a freezing afternoon late last winter, I drove west on I-10, leaving my home in San Antonio for a yearlong sabbatical in Fredericksburg. Though only seventy miles away, the town couldn't feel more removed from my life back home. Fredericksburg may be little, especially by Texas standards-population 12,135-

but it boasts a big reputation. Known for its sweet summer peaches, a booming wine industry, and its German heritage, it will begin celebrating its 175th anniversary this May with a year's worth of festivities. But even a weekend exploring its mix of historic and modern charms-and reveling in its springtime wildflower show-can feel like a reset.

For a landing pad, check in to the Trueheart Hotel, with its twelve cottages and lush, meandering garden nestled just off Main Street. Nick and Alice Adair purchased the property, previously called the Sugarberry Inn, last summer and launched a complete overhaul. Sitting on the sun-drenched patio, I hear the couple's cockapoo, Mr. Bean, rustling in the flower beds as Alice explains her vision. "I wanted an homage to Texas with an element of earthiness and not overly feminine," she says. The result is a "pop retro meets Western meets Hill Country" aesthetic that shines through in festive Pierre Frey wallpapers, traditional Scalamandré fabrics, scalloped door frames painted by the English expat designer Miranda Gill, and watercolors of Texas flora and fauna by the San Antonio artist Tara Gill.

Friday nights in Fredericksburg can be surprisingly bustling, nowhere more so than at Vaudeville. A partnership between chef Jordan Muraglia and artist Richard Boprae, the venue is part bistro, part boutique. "Texans already have a je ne sais quoi," Boprae says, "but somehow, when one crosses the city limit of Fredericksburg, there is a joie de vivre that possesses everyone." Treasures abound in the showroom—Assouline books, Baccarat crystal, Kyle Bunting rugs-while the scents of burrata with truffle asparagus and braised Akaushi short ribs waft from downstairs. I rearrange my schedule when Vaudeville hosts one of its supper clubs, lavish seasonal dinners that are among Texas's best-kept secrets. The winter menu explored the Japanese tradition of omakase-the chef's choice of raw and roasted delights-with wine and sake pairings.

Come Saturday morning, I like to ponder the day's itinerary over a cup of locally roasted coffee at Caliche Coffee Bar & Roastery, set in a onetime beer shack downtown. Directly across the street stands the Pioneer Museum, which invites an amble through a oneroom school house and displays of historic homesteads that recall the German immigrants who settled here in the mid-1800s. For another look at the Texas experience, I walk just a block away to the San Antonio gallerist Charles Morin's new space. Morin is a passionate scholar of vintage Texas art by celebrated figures such as Porfirio Salinas, whose oil canvases depicting fields



of bluebonnets hang next to intricate hand-drawn maps and a collection of utilitarian pottery.

Along Main Street, the nineteenth-century stone buildings remain testaments to the area's German heritage. A statue of hometown hero Admiral Chester Nimitz greets visitors just outside the National Museum of the Pacific War. One of the nation's premier military museums, the fifty-five-thousand-square-foot institution stretches over six acres and will commemorate the town's anniversary with the exhibition The Art of Fredericksburg: 175 Years.

A covey of local boutiques beckon from South Lincoln, just off Main Street. I peruse the romantic antiques and fine bed linens at Carol Hicks Bolton before lunching next door at Woerner Warehouse Cafe, where Jamie Luckey and her business partner, Angela Mancino, serve up fresh-fired pizzas, bagel sandwiches, and loaded avocado toasts in what was once the town's





feed store. Across the street, Jill Elliott runs Blackchalk Home and Laundry, one of Fredericksburg's most charming home and gift boutiques, where she stocks eclectic furniture and original artwork, like Virginia-born artist Dolan Geiman's paper collages of sugar skull cowgirls. Elliott and her husband recently opened Ololo, a bed-and-breakfast with four casitas furnished with Moroccan wedding blankets, Kenyan wall hangings, and other objects her family has collected in their travels.

New businesses like these bring a contemporary flair to town but are balanced by its older, traditional institutions. I could spend a whole afternoon at Der Küchen Laden, with its wall of springerle cookie molds and other culinary treasures. The same goes for Kuckuck's Nest, where Paula Kager, from western Germany, sells authentic lederhosen, dirndls, beer steins, and an impressive collection of Black Forest cuckoo clocks.

Come spring, no Fredericksburg weekend would be complete without taking in the Hill Country's wildflowers, on the way to another of the area's big drawswine. As winter thaws, the roadsides transform into kaleidoscopic carpets of Pinklady primroses, purple wine-cups, and bluebonnets. On the outskirts of town, butterflies fan their wings over yellow and tangerine cosmos at Wildseed Farms. Founder and president John Thomas has built the largest working wildflower farm in the world. "Our motto is 'Come for the flowers and stay for the atmosphere," he tells me as we walk amid its more than two hundred acres of fields, winding trails, and butterfly gardens. In May, the Thomas family will release the first wines from Wildseed Farms Vineyards and serve them in a recently expanded tasting room. Before leaving, I grab a sack of wildflower seeds from the gift shop and dream of spring.

The Texas Hill Country is the second most visited

From left: Art with heart at the Vaudeville boutique; Joanna's Market, in a 1915 farmhouse at Signor Vineyards.







As John Washburne puts it over a Flammkuchen flatbread with smoked salmon. "We're seeing a renaissance of people reassessing their priorities"



wine region in the nation, behind Napa Valley. Richard Becker of Becker Vineyards was one of the early pioneers and is often called the Robert Mondavi of the region. In fact, he was friends with the late California winemaker, and they had an appreciation for each other's vintages. Visiting Becker's vineyard feels like stepping back in time thanks to two restored historic farmhouses. "We try to make it feel like you are at a German property in the nineteenth century," he says.

Three miles from Becker, on the drive back to downtown, I stop into Signor Vineyards, which feels more like a French garden than a Texas winery, with its wisteria trellises and rambling rosebushes. The Signor family's history in the state dates back more than a century, and this year, they will root themselves even deeper by breaking ground on forty rooms at the vineyard for overnight guests. In the sun-dappled courtyard, I swirl a glass of pinot gris as the sun sets over a sea of vines.

Back in town, I meet John and Evelyn Washburne for dinner at Otto's, where a menu of braided pretzels, duck schnitzel, and apple strudel upholds German tradition. The Washburne family owns a number of establishments here, including La Bergerie, a wine, cheese, and charcuterie market, and the Hoffman Haus bedand-breakfast. "One of the best things about Fredericksburg is how inviting everyone is," Evelyn says. She should know-she grew up here and has watched countless people, including her husband and his family, relocate from cities like Dallas and Houston. As John puts it over a Flammkuchen flatbread with smoked salmon, "We're seeing a renaissance of people reassessing their priorities."

The end of a festive weekend requires a hearty sendoffandperhaps some local music. Trek just a bit outside of town for the Sunday brunch and jams at Hill Top Cafe, a forty-year-old, neon-lit watering hole owned by musician Johnny Nicholas of the Grammy-winning band Asleep at the Wheel. Downtown, find more Texas tunes along with ice-cold margaritas and juicy cheese burgers at Hondo's on Main, named after Hondo Crouch, the writer, humorist, and self-proclaimed mayor of (nearby) Luckenbach, whose daughter owns the joint.

I cap off the weekend at the stunning Enchanted Rock, the largest pink monadnock in the nation, laden with Native American lore. At the dome's 425-foot summit, I catch my breath and marvel at 360-degree views of sagebrush and wild prairie. Enchanting indeed. I think of Fredericksburg's delicate dance of old and new, its grafted grapevines and flower-strewn roads, its clean country air and carved cuckoo clocks. Soon enough, my yearlong sabbatical will tick tock to a close, but who knows? Maybe I'll stay a little longer. G

From left: Annie Marie Lewis and her mother, Linda Gail Lewis, jam at Hill Top Cafe; German cuckoo clocks at Kuckuck's Nest.



MARTIN COUNTY

Florida

We miss you!

Wish you were here... but not "here" here At a resort or favorite hotel brand! Come relax on miles of uncrowded beaches, or spend the day fishing. We can get takeout from one of our amazing local restaurants and then explore all the cute shops. You should visit - there's plenty of room to stretch out!

XOXO

MARTIN COUNTY FLORIDA

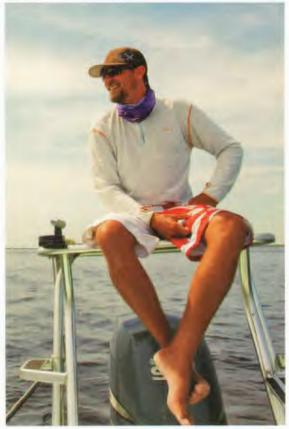


A naturally quaint paradise beckons...

(from a sake distance)







ADVENTURES

Silver King

NOBODY FISHES OLD FLORIDA QUITE LIKE THE TARPON GUIDE DAVID MANGUM

By Monte Burke

ee that ripple in the water there, coming

David Mangum is practically whispering in my ear while pointing over my shoulder into the bay, employing his innovative and unusual guiding technique. "That's a fish, and it will be right here"-he now points to a spot in the water may be ten feet

away from the bow of the boat—"in a couple of seconds. Wait for it...wait...and go!"

l cast and then strip my fly once and immediately feel the unforgettable pull of a tarpon, a fish that the baseball great Ted Williams once described as "dynamic, eager, tackle-busting...sensational, spectacular." It's worthy of all superlatives. The tarpon on the end of my line shakes its head and leaps. It makes an impossibly large hole in the water when it reenters. And then it breaks me off. The whole mind-clearing encounter has lasted all of five seconds. I immediately want to do it all again.

It's a spring day on the Florida Panhandle. My brother Justin and I have snuck away from a family beach week for a day with Mangum, who has become perhaps the area's top tarpon guide and an innovator in the space. We're in Apalachee Bay, near the town of Carrabelle, along a stretch of beach known as the Forgotten Coast for its lack of high-rises and general hubbub. For along time, that moniker also applied to the area's tarpon fishery, a relative unknown when compared with places like the Keys and Boca Grande, the entrenched icons of that world. And while the Panhandle tarpon scene is no longer a secret-there can be some busy days on the water-it remains less popular than its counterparts to the south.

The tarpon in the Panhandle bays tend to bite well, thanks to the water's slight tint (a result of the myriad freshwater rivers that drain into them). But there are fewer of them in this area than there are in the Keys, and they can be hard to find. Which is a good reason to book a guide like Mangum.

Mangum, a wiry forty-eight, is a native Panhandler. He grewup in Destin, where he began fly fishing at age twelve. After a few years in college and seasonal stints



"Tarpon are why I became a guide. They are everything you'd ever want in a fly-rod fish"



Opposite, from left: A big tarpon by the boat; Florida Panhandle guide David Mangum focuses on tarpon from spring through summer. as a fishing guide in Alaska, Mangum started guiding on the Panhandle in 1999. A decade later, he took over Shallow Water Expeditions, a guide service based out of Old Florida Outfitters at the Watercolor resort in Santa Rosa Beach. He and his ten full-time guides concentrate on the roughly two hundred miles between Florida's Big Bend region and Destin, which includes the Forgotten Coast and the popular beach resorts off of 30A. They all share information on the fishing and the conditions and, save for storm blowouts, they fish year-round for redfish, cobia, trout, jacks, false albacore, and pretty much any fish that will eat a fly or a lure.

Tarpon, though, are the glamour fish, and the species Mangum concentrates on almost exclusively from spring through late summer. He's been fishing for, and studying the habits of, tarpon in the Panhandle for three decades. "Tarpon are why I became a guide," he says. "They are everything you'd ever want in a flyrod fish."

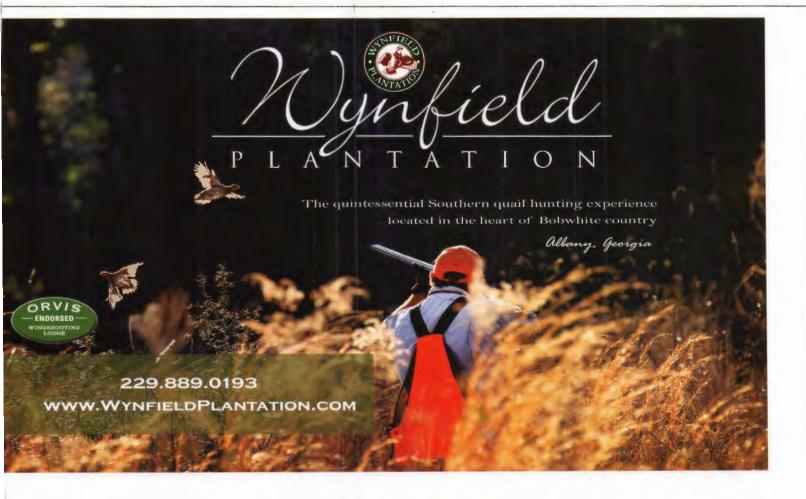
Because of the work he's put in on the flats, and the innovations that have sprung from that work, Mangum has become a favored guide of the heads of industry stalwarts, like Orvis and Simms, and of some of his fellow tarponguides, like Steve Huff. Mangum spent years studying and mapping out the bays—which don't have

as many obvious reefs and points as the Keys—and now has go-to spots, with names like Yellow Brick Road and Dreamland, that aren't necessarily apparent to the untrained eye. He protects these locations. "Most people leave me alone when I'm on them," he says. And just in case they don't get the message, Mangum's skull-shaped anchor buoy puts the point across.

Mangum has created various new flies. His latest, the Dragon Tail, has an almost alarmingly lifelike tail and is now available commercially through Orvis. But his most interesting—and effective—innovation is in his boat. On the bow of his eighteen-foot skiff is what appears to be an extra-tall casting platform. In reality, the platform—which he had custom-made—is for him. You, the angler, stand on the bow as he stands above and behind you, giving instructions and sometimes

Mangum dreamed up the idea five years ago, and it's since spread among some of his guiding brethren. "For a while, I was standing in the bow right next to my clients, which worked pretty well," he says. "But then I thought, Why not add some elevation? Now I can see the fish and relay the information really quickly and calmly. It gives us an extra five seconds to set up." All of which means more chances for a mind-clearing encounter with a mind-blowing fish.

taking hold of your fly rod to point out a fish.







OUR KIND OF PLACE

Lift Every Voice

THE FRONT MAN OF THE GRAMMY-NOMINATED HISS GOLDEN MESSENGER ON FINDING A STAGE-AND A WHOLE LOT MORE-AT NORTH CAROLINA'S NORTHSTAR CHURCH OF THE ARTS By M. C. Taylor

here's a New World Coming" is a song the great Georgia-born singer Bernice Johnson Reagon recorded in 1975. In the early 1960s, Reagon was a founding member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's Freedom Singers, and in 1973 she started Sweet Honey in the Rock, a celebrated Black female a cappella group. But in "There's a New World Coming," which appears on her album Give Your Hands to Struggle, Reagon sings alone: "There's a new day coming! / Everything's gon' be turning over / Everything's gon'

be turning over / Where you gon' be standing when it

The year she recorded the song, Reagon received her PhD in American history from Howard University, and she was already an accomplished civil rights advocate, a folklorist for the Smithsonian, and a mother, but she sounds deceptively young. When I first heard it, I would have guessed her to be no more than fourteen. Having listened to the song hundreds of times now, I consider it a master class on tone and phrasing and sheer intention as a singer, and it occurs to me that the message is what first fooled me. The way that Reagon sings about looking forward to a better universe for herself, her kids, her family, and people she'll never meet is straightforward, steadfast, and hopeful in ways that make it feel like the voice of someone younger. There's none of the hemming and having and hedging of an adult who has had her heart broken too many times to speak without equivocation.

It's fitting that Reagon's refrain of hope-stenciled on a sign facing the intersection of West Geer and North Streets in downtown Durham, North Carolinaannounces the NorthStar Church of the Arts. In 2017. the Grammy-nominated jazz singer Nnenna Freelon and her husband, the celebrated architect Phil Freelon, who died in 2019, purchased and then renovated the 1930s Gothic Revival building, and NorthStar now stands as something of a crossroads of race, class, and identity-often a blending of all three. "The Freelons noticed the trend of shuttering art spaces throughout the city and wanted to claim space for those most often displaced," explains my friend Heather Cook, NorthStar's executive director. The events here include concerts, film screenings, fundraisers, church services, art exhibits, and, on brisk days, sometimes a good old-fashioned bonfire on the lawn.

To me, the beauty of NorthStar is how it mixes all kinds of people in a way that feels true to the kaleidoscopic experiences that make up Durham, and the South. I've performed there with my friend Alice Gerrard, a white singer of old-time music and traditional ballads in her late eighties, and I've watched songwriters such as Kamara Thomas and Rissi Palmer, both African American, sing country songs in a way that powerfully, and joyfully, recognizes how important Black voices are to what we consider country music.

Kym Register, the owner of the Pinhook—the best queer bar in Durham and a venue where many of us have played, or seen, some transcendent shows—is often involved with events at NorthStar either as a singer or an organizer. Artists Alexis Pauline Gumbs and Sangodare host Sunday services informed by a Black feminist theology.

Most of the photographs from the press campaign for my last album, *Terms of Surrender*, were shot at NorthStar. The space is wide open and inviting, built with brick and exposed beams. Gentle light filters through the tall, leaded-glass windows. At the far end

From top: A Sunday

service at North-

Star in Durham;

Jones performs.

drummer Theous

of the church, opposite the entrance, is a deep wooden stage, and worn pews line the main hall. Adjacent to this larger space sits a small kitchen and backstage area just big enough to simmer a pot of collards and hug the neck of a friend you haven't seen in a while. One big reason it doesn't collapse

under all the topical weight of the issues it wrestles with is how *good* the place feels. I'm glad to take my kids there. It's a hangout and a clubhouse. When you go to NorthStar, you pass under a stone lintel engraved with the words THE WAY OF PEACE, and you feel right.

Anytime I'm not on the road, and especially during all the time at home over the past year, I often ride my bike

on the Ellerbee Creek Trail toward downtown, a distance of two miles and change. I like to listen to "There's a New World Coming" as I wind through the backyards and bottoms of a few different neighborhoods, places where I can catch glimpses of the Durham that's borne witness to the Black working class that has been such an important part of this city's cultural history. The trail ends not far from NorthStar, and if you head farther east on Geer Street, along a strip of Latino supermarkets and taquerias, you find yourself in areas less affected by, but now firmly in the sights of, gentrification. NorthStar, in its way, stands as a spiritual bulwark

against the displacement of the cultures that make Durham such a fascinating and important place.

There's a lot of talk nowadays about getting back to normal, and I get it. But I hope the normal that we get back to feels the way the front yard of NorthStar feels on a

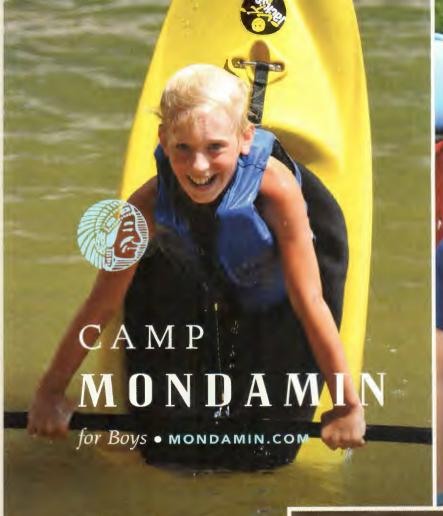
brisk Sunday afternoon: a gathering of people who look different and act differently from one another, singing and eating and tending the bonfire together, with their kids chasing one another around the sign that sings out, "There's a new day coming / Everything's gon' be turning over / Everything's gon' be turning over / Where you gon' be standing when it comes?"



The beauty of NorthStar is how it mixes all kinds of people in a way that feels true to the kaleidoscopic experiences that make up Durham, and the South

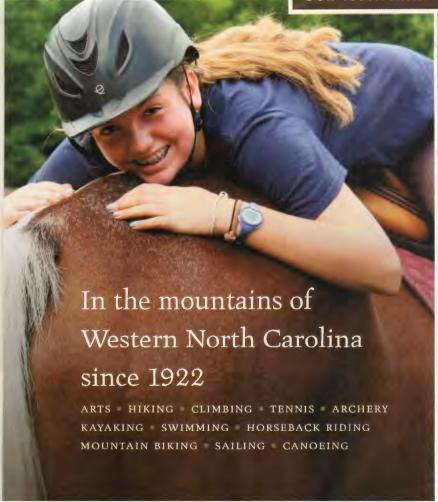








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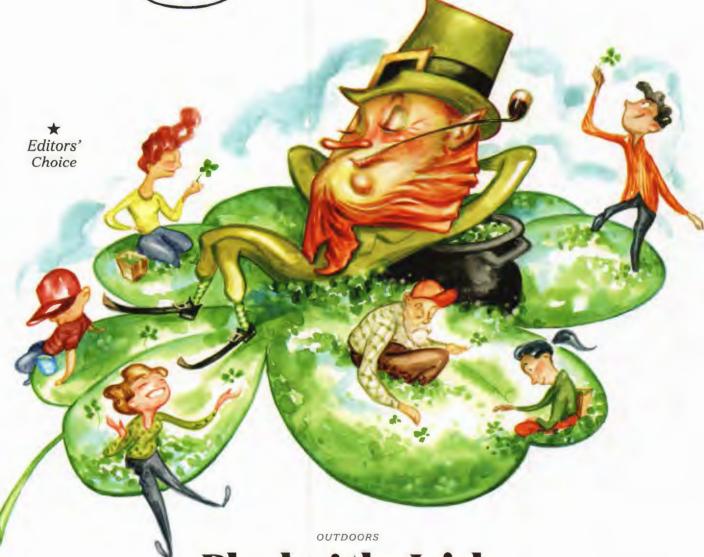


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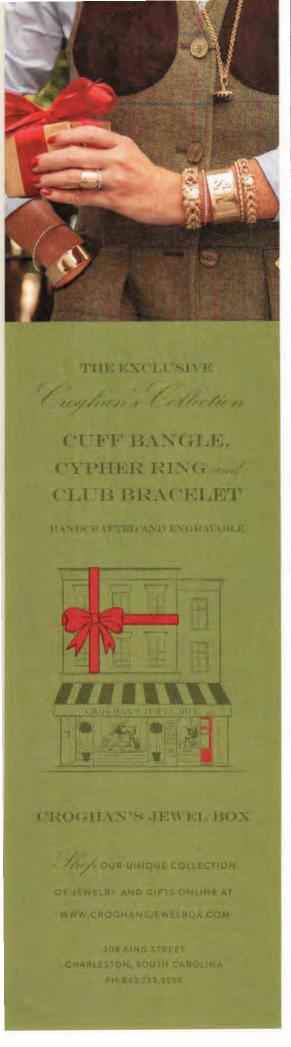
The Southern Coings-on in the South & BEYOND



Pluck o' the Irish

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Washington, D.C., throws a giant Shamrock Festival, and Savannah boasts one of the country's largest St. Patrick's Day (March 17) parades during normal times, but Birmingham is home to a renowned expert on finding four-leaf clovers. Frankie Osborn, a local Realtor, maintains a sixty-five-thousand-strong collection of pressed clovers four-leaved and up, including two prized nine-leafers. (As the Irish lore goes, the first three leaves stand for



SOUTHERN AGENDA

faith, hope, and love; the fourth harbors the luck.) Springtime's warm, wet weather and swaths of farmland and state parks make Alabama ideal for clover growth, Osborn says, but the lucky legume (yep, clover is in the same family as beans and peas) is ripe for the plucking all over the South. Osborn's hunting started as a way to get outside with her kids decades ago-"They grew out of it. I didn't"-and turned into a lifelong passion for which she named her business, Lucky Realty. Though Osborn admits some people just seem to have fortune on their side, she does offer some catchall tips: Visit a field on a warm but cloudy day (the leaves curl up in direct sun), and scan for a square among the triangle shapes. Bring along a small bag to collect your trophies, and, once home, press them to dry in a phone book, if you still keep one of those around. On one point alone. Osborn parts ways with the Irish. "They say only the four-leaf clovers are lucky," she says, "but I think the more leaves, the more luck."

alapark.com

ART

Arkansas

PARTNERING UP

In Bentonville, abrilliant red textile hangs in the center of the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's collaborative exhibition Companion Species (through May 24), a sixteen-foot piece by the Seneca Nation artist Marie Watt that bears the words mother, brother, and neighbor, stitched on by community sewing groups around the country. To complement the textile's message of unity, which draws on Seneca and Iroquois teachings, Crystal Bridges and the nearby Museum of Native American History swapped objects from their collections, including MONAH's large Zia Pueblo jar with a bird design at Crystal Bridges, and a geometric flower painting by the artist Joseph Stella displayed alongside feathered headdresses and dance fans at MONAH. "This is a vibrant exhibit, playful, with bright colors, animals, and work by native and nonnative artists," says Crystal Bridges curator Mindy Besaw. Companion Species asks the following question, she says: "If we took Marie Watt's familiar words and extended them well beyond our family members—if we created empathy and connection across cultures and communities—what could happen?"

crystalbridges.org; monah.us

DESIGN

Florida

PALM BEACH CHIC

Since the Colony Hotel opened, in 1947, its peachy facade has fit right into the laid-back glitz of its Palm Beach home, but the glamour of the interiors faded a bit over the decades. Working with the county historical society and the town's preservation foundation, co-owner Sarah Wetenhall discovered photographs of the original lobby, and the lauded design firm Kemble Interiors took it from there, adding vintage brass tables sculpted to look like palm fronds, dainty scallop-backed sofas draped in Pierre Frey floral fabric, and arch-backed chairs made of rattan. The team meticulously pulled up the marble flooring to reveal the original black terrazzo beneath. The historic photos also revealed a towering mural that once covered the lobby's back wall, so Wetenhall enlisted the hand-painted-wallpaper firm de Gournay to design a custom eighteenfoot floor-to-ceiling installation inspired by South Florida's flora and fauna. "It's like walking into the Everglades," Wetenhall says of the recently reopened lobby. With added whimsy: "The flamingos are wearing top hats. There's a panther with a diamond collar, and a monkey is a little tipsy because he's been drinking a martini." Head to Swifty's near the lobby, a reimagined version of the beloved shuttered New York restaurant, for a libation of your own. thecolonypalmbeach.com

3,

GARDEN

Georgia

SWATHS OF SPLENDOR

"Here's the thing about daffodils: They aren't much work, and you can count on them to perform," says Sara L. Van Beck, an Atlanta-based horticulturist and one

of the South's leading experts on the early spring flower. Records show that by the 1830s varieties like paperwhites and jonquils thrived in home gardens in Georgia. "Newly married daughters would take bulbs from Mama's garden to plant in their new homes," Van Beck explains, and daffodils spread among generations. From February to April, Van Beck recommends a trip to Gibbs Gardens in North Georgia to see the largest daffodil display in the country, and a stop at Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta for heirloom varieties including single-trumpet Golden Spur and Twin Sisters-atwo-flowered white daffodil sporting a butter-yellow cup in each center that closes out the season in early April.

georgiadaffodilsociety.com



SPORTS

Kentucky

MY OLD CORN-TUCKY HOME

People don't dispute the location origins of football (New Jersey) or baseball (New York). But cornhole? The beginnings of backyard bean-bag toss spur hot debate. Ohio fans believe Matthias Kuepermann, a fourteenth-century German cabinetmaker, developed the game, which eventually arrived in Cincinnati with nineteenthcentury immigrants. But in Kentucky, players claim a pioneering hill farmer named Jebediah McGillicuddy came up with the game to pass time with friends in his barn. What's not up for argument: Cornhole is having a moment. The pastime, generally played with a cold beer in hand, is now a professional sport complete with endorsements, a championship broadcast on ESPN, and genuine stars such as Jimmy McGuffin and Greg "Fear the Beard" Geary, together named the 2019-2020

American Cornhole League Team of the Year. The two Kentuckians, a handyman and a foreman lineman, respectively, are known as some of the league's top airmailers—cornhole talk for players who perform the sport's version of a swish. "Igot ninety-six out of a hundred in a row," Geary says, a stat wild enough to make him and McGuffin legends themselves. See them next at the ACL Kickoff Battle in Winter Haven, Florida (February 5–7).

iplayacl.com

DRINK

Louisiana

UNCOMMON GROUNDS

When roasted, ground, and mixed with coffee, the root of curly endive-known as chicory-turns a familiar cup of joe into a signature New Orleans staple. The city's chicory coffee tradition stretches back to the Civil War, when Union blockades forced residents to get creative to extend their coffee supply. Drawing from local Acadian influence, New Orleanians turned to chicory to add body and flavor to their daily brew. Necessity bled into preference. and chicory coffee became ubiquitous in New Orleans café au lait, an easy at-home treat to transport you to the French Quarter when Mardi Gras travel is off the table. "When you heat the milk, don't boil it," says Café du Monde president Jay Roman. "You don't want to separate the milk-you just want to heat it and serve it with the coffee." Café du Monde, located in the French Market along the Mississippi River, has been the mecca for chicory coffee and beignets for a century and a half; it sells its iconic blend online, and grocery stores across the South carry it in distinctive yelloworange tins.

cafedumonde.com

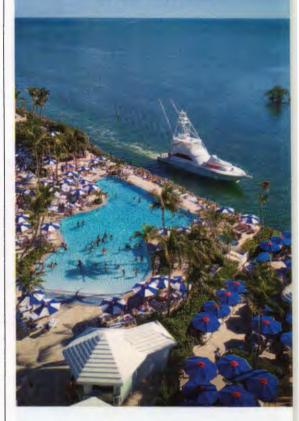
FOOD

Maryland

HUMBLE PIE

"It's really a home pie, just on the basis of its ingredients," says Kara Mae Harris, a food writer who documents forgotten

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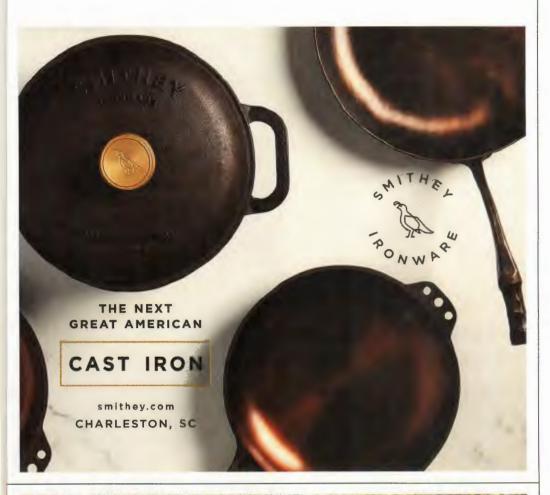
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SOUTHERN AGENDA

Maryland classics in an online database of thirty-eight thousand recipes. Nearly forty of those recipes are for white potato pie-a hard-times, no-fuss custardy treat that pops up in historical Maryland cookbooks and newspapers (a Mrs. Wilson took first prize in the white potato pie category at a fair in 1906). Hot mashed potatoes come together with milk, sugar, and eggs before baking in a pie crust. "Potatoes are a blank slate," says Harris, who likes to jazz up her pies with lemon and nutmeg. At least one Maryland bakery keeps the tradition alive: "We make it every week, and we usually sell out," says Sue Lapp, who with her husband, Mervin, runs Lapp Family Bakery in Kent County. Each weekend, they sell the pies, sprinkled with cinnamon, at the Chestertown Farmers' Market.

oldlineplate.com

SPORTS

Mississippi

LEGEND STATUS

"Let me tell you about Cool Papa Bell," the great Negro League and Major League pitcher Satchel Paige once said. "One time he hit a line drive right past my ear. I turned around and saw the ball hit his rear end as he slid into second," When the National Baseball Hall of Fame inducted James Thomas "Cool Papa" Bell in 1974, it recognized him as one of the fastest players in history. "But when people think of the great players of the Negro League, Bell's name doesn't always come up," says Michael Jaffe, the founder and president of Mississippi's Cool Papa Bell chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research. "He was not only the first ballplayer from the state of Mississippi to be inducted into the Hall of Fame, but to this day he's the only one." A new book out this February, The Bona Fide Legend of Cool Papa Bell by Lonnie Wheeler, a sportswriter who died last year, tells Bell's fascinating story. Born to sharecroppers in Starkville in 1902, Bell played center field for most of his career in St. Louis, and although he never batted below .300 in a season, his speed set him apart. In his hometown, a plaque honoring him stands in McKee Park, fittingly, by the ball fields.

■ sabr.org



OUTDOORS

North Carolina

BEAR CRAWL

Twice a year, the natural phenomenon known as the Shadow of the Bear creeps along Western North Carolina's Whiteside Mountain in Jackson County. For only half an hour each evening, as the setting sun dips behind the mountain at just the right angle, a bear-shaped shadow slowly stretches across the valley below. The spectacle has taken place as long as Whiteside Mountain has been around, which is to say, a very long time. "Three hundred ninety million years," says Nick Breedlove, the executive director of the Jackson County Tourism Development Authority. "It's considered by some geologists to be the oldest mountain in the world." Leaf-peeping crowds seek out the bear each autumn, but locals know there is a secret season from mid-February to early March. To catch it, wait for an unclouded day and visit Rhodes Big View Overlook on Route 64 East around sundown.

discoverjacksonnc.com

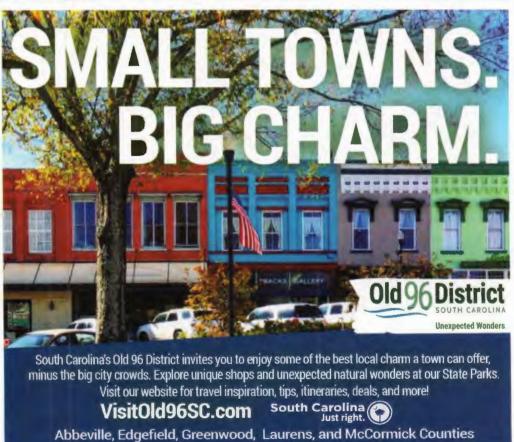
CONSERVATION

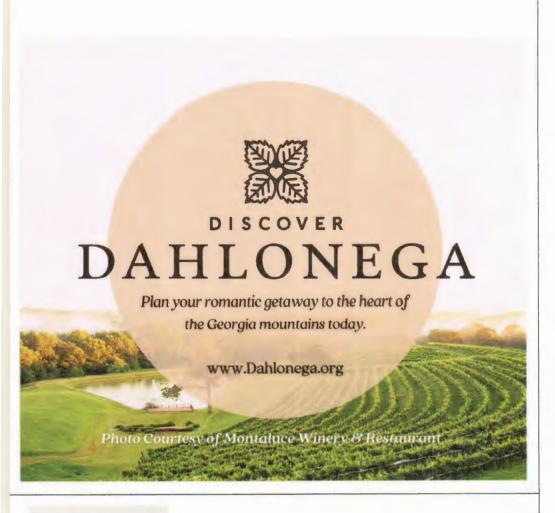
Oklahoma

WHERE THE BISON ROAM

In late March, a drive through the Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in northern Oklahoma's Osage County will reveal frolicking, rust-colored bison calves, the calls of wild turkey and prairie chickens, and the smoke of a prescribed burn that maintains the complex, rare ecosystem. "Tallgrass prairie went from being one of the largest landforms in the world, stretching from Canada to the Gulf Coast, to being one of the most threatened," says









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SOUTHERN AGENDA

Harvey Payne, who served for almost two decades as the preserve's director. The Nature Conservancy bought most of the land in 1989, and has since added to it and restored the prairie using the two factors that shaped it: fire and bison. The three hundred bison introduced in 1993 have now become nineteen hundred strong, and TNC burns a third of the nearly forty thousand acres every year, mimicking historical annual fire patterns. "The Nature Conservancy has turned back the hand of time," Payne says, "and recaptured something that was almost lost forever."

nature.org

FOOD

South Carolina

HUNGRY FOR HISTORY

Chef Kevin Mitchell can teach anyone how to julienne a carrot and perfectly poach an egg, but he also teaches his students at the Culinary Institute of Charleston (CIC) and the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in New York all about the African diaspora. "I'm teaching the South as it relates to food," says Mitchell, whose in-person classes at the CIC and online classes at the CIA dive into the history and nuances of the region's fare. For home cooks, Mitchell's website shares step-by-step videos for plates like shrimp and okra stew. An assignment: "Cook grits and let them set, then cut and deep fry them," Mitchell says of a dish his students would, in non-COVID times, learn to make and plate at the CIC's student-run restaurant in North Charleston. "We serve it with candied pecans and a whipped goat cheese spiced with berbere, a spice from Ethiopia."

chefscholar.wordpress.com

CONSERVATION

Tennessee

SPRING TO LIFE

"In March, male laurel dace will get these bright red bellies and neon yellow fins for spawning season," says Shawna Fix, the Tennessee Aquarium's science coordinator, who has spent five years studying threats to this federally endangered minnow that's found in just three streams on aridge north of Chattanooga. A visit to the Tiny, but Mighty Important gallery at the aquarium offers a hologram display of the challenges facing the laurel dace, and you can view brook trout and native salamanders, including a wrinkly-skinned hellbender. Other projects on the roster for late spring include a study on how two endemic salamanders will respond to climate change and the release of young Southern Appalachian brook trout, Tennessee's only native trout species.

■ tnaqua.org

GARDEN

Texas

SPACE CITY OASIS

Though situated on an island carved out by Sims Bayou just eight miles south of downtown Houston, the Houston Botanic Garden, which recently opened its gates, is anything but isolated. The themed gardens that make up the property's 132 acres of former golf course illustrate how plants connect Houston to the rest of the world. "We have cacti, other succulents, banana plants, elephant ears, spider lilies, different palms," says Brent Moon, the garden's horticulture manager. "You feel like you're transported to different regions of the world, but these are all plants that do well here." Nearby, the coastal prairie and stormwater wetlands collections teach about conservation while the culinary garden, which nods to kitchen gardens from the Mediterranean, Asia, Africa, and Central America, yields olives, beans, corn, and herbs. In late winter and early spring, visit to see the colorful bursts of camellias and redbud trees.

hbg.org

HOLIDAY

Virginia

SEALED WITH A KISS

The community of Valentines, Virginia, offers proof that the state is, in fact, for lovers. In the 1950s, Valentines postmas-



ter Willie R. Wright started a tradition that lasts to this day, when he created heartshaped postmarks for Valentine's Day. "He designed them himself, and he always had a special vision for them," says the late postmaster's wife, Frances D. Wright, who is eighty-seven. One mark featured dogwood flowers, another lace, another a cupid, and all were marked Valentines, Virginia 23887. People still visit the post office, a tiny white building with a red heart on its sign out front, or mail in envelopes full of cards to get the special postmark. "We've had letters come in from every state, and from abroad," Wright says. The labor of love continues as the current postmaster, Kathryn Fajna, readies the rubber and ink for another flurry of envelopes this February 14. To go the extra mile this year for a special someone, pop your valentine (already addressed, with money for firstclass postage) into another envelope and sendit to: Valentines Postmaster, 23 Manning Drive, Valentines, VA 23887.

virginia.org

PRESERVATION

Washington,

TALE OF TWO CITIES

Towering sixty feet above H Street in D.C.'s Chinatown, the Friendship Archway commemorates Washington and Beijing's status as sister cities. The architect Alfred Liu designed the intricate structure in the mid-1980s to emulate Ming and Qing dynasty gates with cantilevered roofs constructed with wooden brackets

interlocked via the ancient technique of dougong; seven thousand brightly colored glazed tiles; details hand carved by Chinese artisans; and more than 270 painted dragons. Now, three-plus decades after its construction, the arch just got a much-deserved face-lift. "We restored it to how it looked before all these years of wear and tear," says Jeffrey Scott of the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities (CAH). As a companion to the conservation, the CAH is producing a podcast this spring and will feature an interview with Liu about his work and the importance of preservation. "As a community, we are always looking for ways to advance our shared values, and one powerful way we do that is through art," says Washington mayor Muriel Bowser, whose office partnered with the CAH to oversee the restoration. "We are proud to conserve an iconic landmark that uplifts and celebrates the history and diversity of our city."

dcarts.dc.gov

West Virginia

TAPPING POTENTIAL

Vermont maintains its ranking as the top maple syrup producer in the country-for now. "West Virginia actually has more maple trees than Vermont, and a longer growing season," says Keith Heasley, president of the West Virginia Maple Syrup Producers Association and himself a proud collector of the juice from some 1,450 taps. Warmer weather causes a darker sap, which has a robust maple flavor. The sap runs in the spring, when producers across the state drill into mature trees and set up tubing to catch about two gallons of sap per day, per tree. Then it's off to the sugar shacks for some serious concentrating: Fifty gallons of sap yield just one gallon of syrup. The third weekends in both February and March are designated as Mountain State Maple Days, and producers across the state will open their sugar shacks to the public, making it the time, Heasley says, "to get your syrup fresh off the stove."

wvmspa.org

-Rossi Anastopoulo, Kinsey Gidick, Lindsey Liles, and Caroline Sanders

GARDENGUN Field Report

A RESOURCE FOR THE BEST EVENTS, EXCURSIONS, AND PROMOTIONS



















OCTOBER 31 G&G Shoot-Out South Pittsburg, Tennessee

On October 31, Garden & Gun hosted its first-ever golf tournament at Sweetens Cove Golf Club to celebrate the launch of the newly debuted Sweetens Cove Tennessee Straight Bourbon Whiskey. Following the friendly tournament, guests gathered on the grounds for a lively Bourbon Bash where cocktails and Southern fare were served and the day's winners were announced.

1. Sweetens Cove architect and founder Rob Collins with managing partner and co-owner Mark Rivers. 2. Nestled in Tennessee's Sequatchie Valley, Sweetens Cove's award-winning course plays host to eager golfers. 3. Morning participants celebrate a winning shot on one of nine challenging holes. 4. An afternoon golfer lines up his perfect putt. 5. Prepared by the local Lee Towery Catering, the evening's tasty selections include miniature crab cake "golf balls." 6. Stitch Golf executive director of marketing Chandler King Venditti and her husband, Nick, with CEO Brad King and his wife, Deanna. 7. Overall tournament winner Chris Teichmiller reacts to a thrilling win in the five-team shoot-out. 8. Designed by King-Collins Golf, Sweetens Cove is home to one of the most acclaimed golf designs in the country. 9. Sweetens Cove's own Tennessee Straight Bourbon Whiskey is on hand for sipping throughout the event.

131

NOVEMBER 7

Annual Shoot

Greensboro, Georgia

G&G hosted its eighth annual sporting clays tournament at Reynolds Lake Oconee's Sandy Creek Sporting Grounds, where guests enjoyed a day of shooting and Southern hospitality.

G&G cofounder and CEO Rebecca
 Darwin with Marcelo Oliviero, the tournament's highest-scoring shooter.
 Guests proceed through Sandy Creek's exquisite twelve-station, 100-target sporting clays course.





2020

Palmetto Bluff

Bluffton, South Carolina

During 2020's Artist in Residence program, makers and innovators gathered at Palmetto Bluff for workshops, discussions, and merriment.

12. During the final night of his residence, Vishwesh Bhatt, the James Beard Award-winning chef of Oxford, Mississippi's Snackbar, prepares his signature fish and grits with okra and crab curry. 13. As February's Artist in Residence, North Carolina pitmaster Sam Jones leads guests through Carolina BBQ 101, an interactive workshop on barbecue basics.







G&G



VISIT PALMETTO BLUFF in Bluffton, SC, for workshops and classes hosted by G&G's favorite featured artisans, makers, chefs, and musicians.

February STEPHANIE FEES Scratch Pasta Co.

March MANEET CHAUHAN

Chef. Restaurateur. Television Personality, and Author

April **DOROTHY SHAIN**

Contemporary Artist and Designer

May **ANNIE MORAN**

Painter and Designer

June

ANNE THOMPSON BLACKWELL Blackmell Botanicals

CASSANDRA RICHARDSON AND CARLENE BROWNER BR Design Co.

August

RICHARD PATRICK Cathead Distillery

September **CUINTIN MIDDLETON**

Middleton Made Knives

October **BROOKS REITZ**

Chef, Restaurateur, and Entrepreneur

November ERIC MCKAY AND PATRICK MURTAUGH

Hardywood Brewing Co.

December **ELISABETH CONNOLLY**

Elisabeth Rose and Aesthet

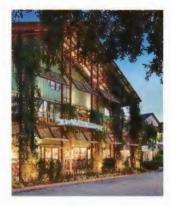
PALMETTOBLUFFARTIST.COM

CASSANDRA RICHARDSON AND CARLENE BROWNER,



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A guide to adventures in the South and beyond



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FIELDSHOP

BY GARDEN & GUN



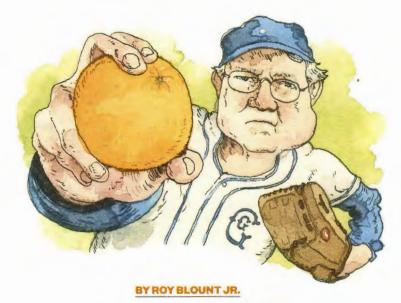
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Play Ball!

RECOLLECTIONS FROM SPRING ON THE DIAMOND

t's coming on spring-training time in Florida. Back in the seventies and eighties, my sportswriting heyday, I would be down there every year in all those out-of-the-way towns like Dunedin, Lakeland, Bradenton, Fort Myers. I remember the oranges, best I ever ate, from the roadside stands that were everywhere, and I remember hurtling along the interstate in my rental car, ninety miles an hour in and out of traffic, keeping up with Reggie Jackson.

Wherever it was that Reggie and I drove to, we found Pirates there. I knew Pirates. "Hey Dock," I said, for one of the Pirates present was Dock Ellis (who pitched a nohitter under the influence of LSD), and I figured he and Reggie (who said of a home run he hit in Boston, "It was an insurance run, so I hit it to the Prudential Building") might want to cut up some touches.

Nope. You would have thought I had walked into a saloon with Sitting Bull and announced, in a chipper ain't-it-a-small-world sort of voice, "Look who's here, Bull—it's General Custer!"

The last time Reggie and Dock had crossed paths, Dock had thrown a pitch that Reggie annihilated: the longest home run ever hit in an All-Star game. The next

time they faced each other, Dock threw a pitch that hit Reggie in the face.

"Baseball," the famously amiable Ernie Banks of the Cubs once said, "is a game of relaxed skills, but you have to have a certain amount of hate to do well."

I don't cover baseball anymore, but I've kept a world of clippings and notes from those days. Here's a much cozier spring training story, related by Joe Falls in the *Sporting News*. In 1957 the New York Giants traded the old knuckleballer Hoyt Wilhelm for the Cardinals first baseman Whitey Lockman.

The Giants were training in Phoenix, the Cardinals in St. Petersburg. So the Lockman family and the Wilhelms loaded up their respective cars and settled in for long drives. In Dallas, the Wilhelms stopped at a traffic light. I'll let Falls tell you what happened next:

Mrs. Wilhelm looked out the window and gasped.

"Isn't that Whitey and Shirley in that other car?"

It sure was. The Wilhelms waved them down and, incredible as it seems, the two families visited on that Dallas street. Wilhelm's knuckler, astonishingly, kept him on the mound till he was a month shy of fifty years old. I never wrote a story about the knuckleball, but my files reveal a lot of research on it. I would have quoted Jimmy Cannon from 1953: "The knuckleball Johnny Lindell throws resembles an obese moth that has spent the winter in a reefer smoker's closet and is able to fly without wings."

An obese moth!

A knuckleball is easy on a pitcher's arm, but hard on a catcher. "I'd rather catch diphtheria," said Smoky Burgess.

"A knuckleball toils not, neither does it spin." My own line. Found it on a scrap of paper just now. I have worked it in somewhere at last.

Spin being the key to a knuckleball, don't you know: It is released with such minimal rollover that the zephyrs set it dancing. A "dipsy-doo delivery" is what any number of baseball writers have called the knuckleball over the years. Leo Durocher claimed that the arm of a knuckleballer named Freddie Fitzsimmons "was so crooked that he literally could not reach down and pick something up. He had to bend from the knees....To put as little strain on his arm as possible, he only pitched once a week, and even then his arm would drawup, inning by inning, until you could see his hand disappear up his sleeve."

Bit of a stretcher there, Leo. Figurative, maybe. Bob Apodaca, who pitched for the Mets in the mid-seventies, had this to say about arm disappearance:

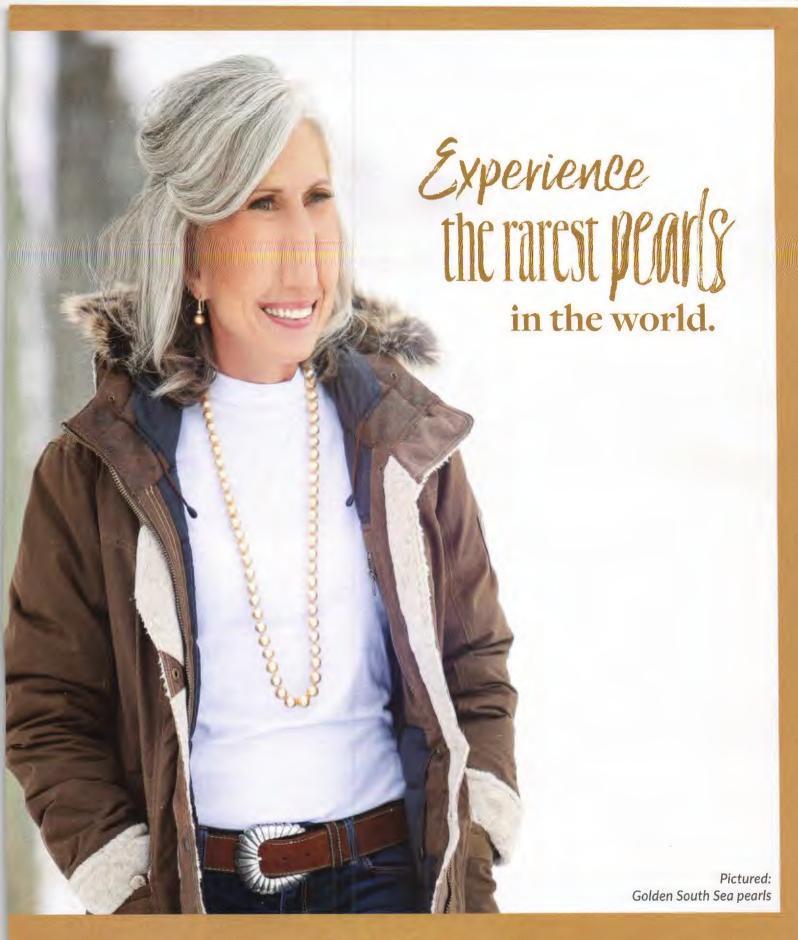
"If you throw and feel something different, you got these automatic antennae that go up. You grab for the ball real quick....You know how your arm is supposed to react, and when it doesn't react like it should, you say, 'Oh, please come back, please come back." Apodaca retired at thirty-one.

It will sort you out, the game of baseball. One spring training when Sparky Anderson was managing the Tigers, he discussed a pitcher named Terry Leach, a seasoned veteran trying to catch on with Detroit at age forty-one. Little too same-old, Sparky suggested: "Terry Leach reminds me of... Terry Leach."

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